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Trump ousts top defense official who certified Ukraine aid

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has ousted the Pentagon's top policy official who had certified last year that Ukraine had made enough anti-corruption progress to justify the Trump administration's release of congressionally authorized aid to Kyiv in its conflict against Russian-backed separatists. John Rood resigned Wednesday, saying he was

leaving at Trump's request. The Trump administration's delay in releasing the aid to Ukraine was central to the president's impeachment by the House on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. The Senate voted to acquit the president. But in the wake of the Senate trial, an emboldened Trump has gone after officials he has perceived as being disloyal.

Continued on next page



In this Feb. 2, 2018, file photo, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, John Rood, speaks during a news conference on the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, at the Pentagon.

Associated Press



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In this Feb. 7, 2008 file photo, John Rood, then U.S. Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, answers questions from the media during a press conference at the Cernin's Palace in Prague, Czech Republic.

Associated Press

Continued from front Rood is the latest official to be purged. His forced resignation comes as Democrats on the Hill express concerns that Trump is on

a vendetta in the wake of his acquittal. Just days after the Senate vote, the White House reassigned an Army officer, Lt. Col. Alex Vindman, a key witness in the impeachment inquiry, from the National Security Council, and pushed his twin brother, an NSC lawyer, out with him. Gordon Sondland, Trump's ambassador to the European Union who also was a key witness before House investigators, was recalled from his post. Trump tweeted Wednesday that he wanted to "thank John Rood for his service to our Country, and wish him well in his future endeavors!"

Rood, in his letter to Trump, did not mention Ukraine. "It's my understanding from Secretary (Mark) Esper that you requested my resignation," Rood said. Rood said he will step down as of Feb. 28.

Rood wrote in a May 23 letter to Congress that the Pentagon had made a thorough assessment of Ukraine's anti-corruption actions and other reforms. And he said that, "I have certified that the government of Ukraine has taken substantial actions to make defense institutional reforms for the purpose of decreasing corruption" and making other improvements."

Rood wrote that his certification, legally required before the aid could be released, was based on insights gained in "persistent U.S. engagement" with Ukraine, including meetings between the U.S. defense secretary and his Ukrainian counterpart.

Asked about Rood's resignation, chief Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman declined to speculate on the reason for Trump's decision.

"The president has the opportunity and the ability

to have the team that he wants to have in policy positions," Hoffman said at news conference. He said Rood's resignation letter spoke for itself.

Rood last year told reporters that, "In the weeks after signing the certification I did become aware that the aid had been held. I never received a very clear explanation other than there were concerns about corruption in Ukraine." He also spoke in favor of releasing the aid, suggesting that withholding it would hurt America's defense priorities.

Pentagon press secretary Alyssa Farah said James Anderson, who is currently serving as the deputy for policy, will take over the job until a permanent replacement is appointed by the President and confirmed.

Esper said Rood played "a critical role" on issues such as nuclear deterrence, NATO, missile defense and the National Defense Strategy.

Rood has served as under-secretary for policy since January 2018, but also had worked in various government agencies including the State Department, the CIA and the NSC for more than 20 years. He held senior policy jobs mainly during Republican administrations and also served as a senior policy adviser to Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz.

Rood also was a senior vice president at Lockheed Martin International. □

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Fire at Minnesota recycling plant affecting air quality

BECKER, Minn. (AP) — Officials are monitoring the air quality in Becker where a fire at a metal recycling plant continues to burn. Firefighters continued to fight the stubborn blaze Wednesday after working all day and through the night Tuesday at Northern Metal Recycling plant. The fire still had a number of hot spots and was not fully under control as of early Wednesday afternoon. In a Facebook update Wednesday evening, the Becker Police Department said fire investigators be-

lieve the fire could last several more days. Residents are not being asked to evacuate but are being asked to stay away from the immediate area of the fire. Becker Police Chief Brent Baloun says the cause of the fire remains unknown. Prevailing winds have been blowing smoke away from Becker. "We've been fortunate with the wind," Baloun said. But residents in Big Lake, 9 miles (14 kilometers) south-east of Becker, caught most of the drift Wednesday.

Big Lake Police Chief Joel Scharf says the smell of burning plastic and smoke wafting through town raised health concerns from residents. Firefighter Toni Knutson says the fire is burning under a huge pile of cars. She says cranes are being used to remove the vehicles from the pile one-by-one as firefighters spray water on the fire. Knutson says dozens of firefighters are on the scene, with aid coming from as far as two hours away.






Icy covered junker autos lie in a heap as firefighters on Wednesday morning remained on the scene of a fire that has been burning for more than 24 hours at the Northern Metal Recycling plant, Feb. 19, 2020, in Becker, Minn.

Associated Press

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AP source: Barr tells people he might quit over Trump tweets

By **MICHAEL BALSAMO** and **ZEKE MILLER**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General William Barr has told people close to him he's considering quitting his post after President Donald Trump wouldn't heed his warning to stop tweeting about Justice Department cases, an administration official told The Associated Press.

The revelation came days after Barr took a public swipe at the president, saying in a television interview that Trump's tweets about Justice Department cases and staffers make it "impossible" for him to do his job. The next day, Trump ignored Barr's request and insisted that he has the "legal right" to intervene in criminal cases and sidestep the Justice Department's historical independence. The administration official was not authorized to discuss Barr's private remarks and requested anonymity. It's unclear how seriously Barr has considered resigning or whether he is instead trying to pressure Trump to back off his provocative tweets about the Justice Department. Barr's spokeswoman said late Tuesday that the attorney general "has no plans to resign."

Barr is one of the president's closest allies in the administration and has been a staunch defender of Trump's policy decisions. But considering resigning from his post suggests he sees the Justice Department's reputation as an institution that makes decisions on criminal cases independently, unbound by political sway, as more important than his allegiance to the president.

Trump tweeted on Tuesday that he's considering suing



In this Feb. 10, 2020, file photo, Attorney General William Barr speaks at the National Sheriffs' Association Winter Legislative and Technology Conference in Washington.

Associated Press

those involved in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation and opined that his confidant Roger Stone deserved a new trial after being convicted of witness tampering and obstruction.

Barr's comments about Trump's tweets came during an interview with ABC News just days after his Justice Department overruled its own prosecutors — who had recommended in a court filing that Stone be sentenced to seven to nine years in prison — and took the extraordinary step of lowering the amount of prison time it would seek. All four prosecutors from Stone's trial quit the case and one left the Justice Department altogether.

The reversal came after Trump blasted the original sentencing recommendation as "very horrible and unfair," though officials have insisted the decision to make a new recommendation came before Trump's tweet.

"I'm happy to say that, in fact, the president has never asked me to do anything in a criminal case," Barr said in the ABC News interview. "However, to have public statements and tweets made about the department, about our people ... about cases pending in the department, and about judges before whom we have cases, make it impossible for me to do my job and to assure the courts and the prosecutors in the department that we're doing our work with integrity." The attorney general had been sharing the same sentiment privately with Trump for several weeks, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. The person was not authorized to discuss Barr's private conversations and requested anonymity.

Speaking to reporters earlier Tuesday, Trump said he understood his tweets makes Barr's job harder, but he showed no signs of relenting. He said he had

"total confidence in my attorney general" but insisted that "everybody has the right to speak their mind." He added: "And I probably wouldn't have gotten here without social media because I certainly don't get fair press."

"Yeah, I do make his job harder. I do agree with

that. I think that's true," he said. "He's a very straight shooter. We have a great attorney general, and he's working very hard. ... But I will say this: Social media, for me, has been very important because it gives me a voice, because I don't get that voice in the press. In the media, I don't get that voice. So I'm allowed to have a voice."

Barr, serving in his second stint as attorney general, sought to paint himself as an independent leader who would not bow to political pressure. But Democrats have repeatedly accused Barr of acting more like the president's personal attorney than the attorney general. Barr proved to be a largely reliable Trump ally and defender of presidential power.

Trump would likely face a challenge trying to find a replacement for Barr, who is overseeing several investigations that are important to the president, including a criminal investigation into the origins of the Russia probe. Any nominee would face a grilling in the Senate. □

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Judge rips PG&E for poor safety record leading to wildfires

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE

AP Business Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

A U.S. judge ripped into Pacific Gas & Electric on Wednesday, saying its executives have put greed before safety and telling officials from the utility blamed for catastrophic California wildfires to plan to add at least 1,100 more tree trimmers to cut the risk of even more blazes.

"I am going to do everything I can to protect this state from more death and destruction from this convicted felon," U.S. District Judge William Alsup said of PG&E.

He delivered the harsh rebuke of the nation's largest utility during a court hearing to review how well PG&E has complied with the terms of a five-year criminal probation imposed after its natural gas lines blew up a San Francisco Bay Area neighborhood and killed eight people in 2010. The utility was convicted of six felony counts of falsifying records and safety violations in 2016.

Alsup blasted PG&E for its abysmal track record since its probation began in January 2017. In that time, PG&E's aging power lines have been blamed for igniting a series of wildfires that killed nearly 130 people and destroyed thousands of homes.

The aftermath saddled PG&E with more than \$50 billion in potential liabilities, driving the San Francisco company into bankruptcy

13 months ago.

The judge told PG&E that he believes the fires could have been prevented had it upgraded and maintained its electrical system instead of funneling billions of dollars into shareholder dividends and executive bonuses.

"PG&E poses a threat to the safety of the people of Northern California because you are so far behind," Alsup said.

PG&E lawyer Kevin Orsini assured the judge that the company has "fundamentally changed" since hiring a new CEO, Bill Johnson, and overhauling its board of directors last April.

After scolding the utility for its neglect, Alsup complimented its new management team for deliberately turning off power to as many as 2 million people last fall to prevent wildfires during hot, windy weather. Although the outages infuriated and inconvenienced people, the judge said he believes they may have prevented dozens more potentially deadly fires.

"They deserve some credit (for the outages) and having the courage to do it in the face of all the criticism," Alsup said.

As another firefighting measure, Alsup said he plans to order PG&E to expand its tree-trimming force from roughly 5,400 contractors to 6,500 to help prevent vegetation from falling onto its power lines and igniting.

Alsup did not set a timeline



In this Sept. 9, 2010, file photo, a massive fire following a pipeline explosion roars through a mostly residential neighborhood in San Bruno, Calif.

Associated Press

for adding tree trimmers, giving PG&E until March 2 to provide more information about logistical challenges in doing so.

The judge's harsh words came a day after the head of the California Public Utilities Commission proposed a new enforcement process that could allow the regulatory agency to revoke PG&E's license if it failed to comply.

"I am very concerned about PG&E's pattern of safety-related failures," commission President Marybel Batjer wrote Tuesday. Batjer's words largely echoed those of Gov. Gavin Newsom, who appointed her last year. Since December, Newsom has tried to pressure PG&E into taking more radical steps to change its culture and reduce its debt when it comes out of bankruptcy so it can afford to invest an estimated \$40 billion into upgrading its decaying electrical grid during the next decade.

Newsom and Batjer have unusual leverage over PG&E because the company needs California to approve its reorganization plan to emerge from bankruptcy by June 30 so it can qualify for coverage from a

wildfire insurance fund created by the state last summer.

Noting his ability to crack down on PG&E will end with its probation in 23 months, Alsup urged Newsom to take a hard look at whether the utility should remain part of a for-profit company that faces continual pressure from investors to boost its stock price by making more money.

"We are in a critical chapter," Alsup said.

Newsom has threatened to lead a government-backed attempt to take over PG&E unless it bends to his demands, which include replacing the company's entire 14-member board, including Johnson. PG&E has promised to reshuffle at least part of its board and is in talks with Newsom's representatives about other possible concessions.

But the company is committed to remaining a for-profit company, a point it punctuated this week when it released five-year projections that it would earn nearly \$2.4 billion in 2024 — the most in its history. The company has lost \$14.5 billion in the past two years as it deals with the devastation from wildfires. □

14-year-olds plead not guilty in NYC college student's death

NEW YORK (AP) — Two 14-year-old boys pleaded not guilty Wednesday to murder in the death of a Barnard College student who was fatally stabbed during a robbery in a park. Manhattan prosecutors said that Rashaun Weaver stabbed 18-year-old Tessa

Majors during a Dec. 11 robbery and that Luchiano Lewis prevented her from escaping as she called for help.

A 13-year-old has also been charged, but his name has not been released because he is being tried as a juvenile. □



Inman Majors, father of Barnard College student Tessa Majors who was fatally stabbed during a robbery in December, arrives at court, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2020, in New York.

Associated Press

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U.S. judge sides with migrants in case against Border Patrol

PHOENIX (AP) — Conditions at most Border Patrol facilities in Arizona are punitive and unconstitutional, a U.S. judge in Arizona said Wednesday while ruling in favor of migrants who have long-complained about inhumane and unsanitary conditions in holding cells.

The ruling came weeks after the conclusion of a seven-day trial in which attorneys for migrants who sued in 2015 argued that the agency holds immigrants in extremely cold, overcrowded, unsanitary and inhumane cells. The order makes permanent a preliminary injunction that U.S. District Court Judge David C. Bury issued in 2016 requiring the Tucson Sector to provide clean mats and thin blankets to migrants held for longer than 12 hours and to allow them to clean themselves. It also bars the agency from holding migrants more than 48 hours if they've been fully processed, which is common when other agencies involved in taking the migrants, such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, don't have the capacity to pick them up in a reasonable amount of time.

Bury is also banning the use of bathrooms for sleeping, which came to light during the trial this year, when video was shown of a man trying to reach a bathroom but failing to because migrants were sleeping in them.

"Today's decision is a tremendous victory for communities everywhere fighting courageously to uphold human dignity and the rights enshrined in our Constitution," Alvaro M. Huerta, staff attorney at the Nation-



In this Aug. 9, 2012, file photo, suspected illegal immigrants are transferred out of the holding area after being processed at the Tucson Sector of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection headquarters in Tucson, Ariz.

Associated Press

al Immigration Law Center, said in a statement.

The center was one of the advocacy groups that brought the case forward. It was argued in court by attorneys for the law firm Morrison & Foerster.

"We are enthused that our justice system has intervened in a meaningful way to institute much needed change and hold CBP accountable," Huerta said. Customs and Border Protection didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

In his order, Bury said there's no evidence CBP intends to create punitive conditions, but that the agency has stretched resources to "provide the best conditions of confinement available under the circumstances."

Although the lawsuit predates last year's surge in immigrant arrivals, it illustrates

some of the challenges posed when migrants are detained, especially if they are children. Reports of hellish conditions circulated in many parts of the Texas border last year, where thousands of immigrants — largely families — crossed over from Mexico. In El Paso, an inspection by the government's internal watchdog found there were 900 people crammed into a 125-person facility at one point in May.

In his order Wednesday, Bury wrote that the Border Patrol and its parent agencies, or the defendants in the case, "administer a detention system that deprives detainees, who are held in CBP stations, Tucson Sector, longer than 48 hours, of conditions of confinement that meet basic human needs."

Conditions that migrants —

who are considered civil detainees, not criminal — are subjected to after 12 hours are "presumptively-punitive and violate the Constitution," and are even worse than a criminal jail or prison, the judge wrote. Bury has been critical of the agency, saying it has done little to remedy issues, especially around overcrowding and migrants' inability to sleep.

"Nobody has done anything. Is that why a court has to jump in?" Bury asked during the last day of trial on Jan. 22. "It just seems like the lack of a response to these numbers just calls for a court order."

Government attorneys said in their closing arguments last month that plaintiffs didn't prove the agency violated any constitutional rights. It says many things are out of the agency's

control, such as whether other agencies involved in taking migrants have capacity.

Its facilities were built of short-term stays, for adults. Holding cells are in odd shapes, reducing the number of sleeping mats that can comfortably fit on the ground. On nights when agents arrest large groups of people, or when other agencies involved in immigration don't have the capacity to pick them up, cells become extremely overcrowded.

A video displayed on the opening day of the trial showed a man walking over body after body as he tried to make his way to the bathroom. Once there, he realized all stalls had people sleeping in them.

Migrants have long decried conditions in Border Patrol facilities, now infamously known as hieleras, or iceboxes. And although the Tucson Sector hasn't experienced the massive number of immigrants that other parts of the Southwest border has, the number of hours that migrants spend in custody there has continued to grow.

About 12,000 people were in custody for more than 72 hours in the Tucson Sector last year, or about 20%. The average time in custody was nearly 54 hours.

On Friday, another federal judge ruled in favor of immigrants and against the government. The judge found the U.S. government in contempt after authorities deported five young immigrants who were seeking to remain in the country under a program for abused and neglected immigrant children. □

Guatemalan woman gives birth at U.S. Border Patrol office

CHULA VISTA, Calif. (AP) — A pregnant Guatemalan woman arrested on suspicion of crossing the border from Mexico without authorization gave birth a short time later at a U.S. Border Patrol station in Southern California, authorities said. The 27-year-

old woman and her family were spotted walking just east of the Otay Mesa Port of Entry near San Diego on Sunday, the Union-Tribune reported. It is believed they used a ladder to get over the border fence, said Border Patrol spokesman Jarrett Decker. The agent who

made the arrest noticed the woman was pregnant but said she did not appear to be in distress and did not request any medical attention, officials said. Once they got to the Chula Vista station, the woman, the baby's father and two children were being exam-

ined for a routine medical assessment when she went into labor, officials said.

"The medical staff, along with agents, prepared an area for the mother to give birth," the Border Patrol said in a statement.

The woman and her baby girl were taken to a hospi-

tal and were in stable condition, the newspaper said Wednesday.

"Our agents are well trained to manage the unexpected, and I'm proud of the work they did in caring for this mother," Chief Patrol Agent Aaron Heitke said in a statement. □



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Missouri man charged in Chinese wife's death despite no body

By **MARGARET STAFFORD**
Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — The American husband of a Chinese woman who has been missing since October was charged Wednesday with first-degree murder in her death, even though her body hasn't been found. Joseph Elledge, of Columbia, Missouri, was charged with first-degree murder in the death of 28-year-old Mengqi Ji, who has been missing since October, according to court records. Prosecutors have requested a \$5 million cash-only bond.

According to a probable cause statement, Elledge did not report his wife missing for more than 24 hours after he woke up and found her gone on Oct. 9. He instead spent time playing video games and contacted his mother and a friend without mentioning that she was missing, even though her disappearance was unusual, according to the statement. He didn't mention he didn't know where she was until one of her friends came to the house the next day at the request of her parents.

At that point, he put his wife's mother on a video call and told her Ji was missing and then began contacting her friends to see if they knew where she was. None of her family or friends have had contact with Ji since she went missing and there has been no activity on her financial accounts.

During the hours after his wife disappeared, Elledge took two drives with the couple's 1-year-old daughter to rural areas and to a popular biking and hiking trail with access to a river. "These locations are places where a body could be dis-

posed of and not located for some time," the statement says.

He did not leave a note for his wife, locked the door and took her apartment key when he left their home. "Joseph did not have any plans for if Mengqi returned while he was gone," the statement says.

Elledge, who quickly was named as the prime suspect in her disappearance, was already charged with child endangerment and abuse of a child. Prosecutors say Elledge separated his wife from their 1-year-old daughter and that the separation created "a substantial risk" to the girl. Her maternal grandparents and paternal grandparents share custody.

An after hours call to Elledge's attorneys' office seeking comment was not immediately returned.

Amy Salladay, the attorney for Ji's family, said the family was "very supportive" of Boone County Prosecutor Dan Knight's decision to file charges now rather than wait until her body is found. "They understand the risks associated with double jeopardy but they also need resolution for their granddaughter," Salladay said. "They have full confidence that Mr. Knight has carefully considered all the factors related to filing the case now."

Knight, who could not be reached for comment Wednesday, had described Elledge as a "jealous, controlling, manipulative psychopath," during a November hearing.

Her mother told police Elledge was a controlling husband who would not allow Ji to have a social life and would get upset if she left the house for trips that he thought were too long.



This undated file photo provided by Boone County Sheriff's Department in Columbia, Mo., shows Joseph Elledge.

Associated Press

Recordings of conversations between the couple before Ji disappeared showed him to be "openly hostile and at times threatening to Ji." At one point in June 2019 he said "I'm ready to be done talking to you forever" and in August said he wanted a divorce, according to the statement.

Authorities have been searching for Ji's body in the Lamine River near Boonville.

Elledge's cell phone records show he drove to that river for about 45 minutes in the hours after his wife went missing, the statement says. Two police cadaver dogs alerted to the presence of human decomposition in the river. The area has been searched several times with different methods but the "complicated nature" of the area has prevented a comprehensive search, the statement says.

Salladay said Ji's family appreciates the Columbia

police search efforts so far, but are concerned there is no clear plan for further search efforts. She said the family would prefer a multidisciplinary team working together and taking advantage of all the professional volunteers who have offered their help.

Ji, whom law enforcement initially identified as Mengqi

Ji Elledge, received a master's degree in mechanical and aerospace engineering from the University of Missouri in December 2014. She previously attended the East China University of Science and Technology in Shanghai.

Elledge was studying at the University of Missouri when he was arrested last year. □



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'Voodoo statistics' floated as EU budget battle looms

By **LORNE COOK**
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — After almost two years of sparring, the European Union was girding itself Wednesday for perhaps the final round of the bloc's traditional budget slug-fest, a potentially long and fiery summit to thrash out Europe's spending plans for the next seven years.

Leaders from the 27 nations are gathering in Brussels on Thursday to pore over the budget of more than 1 trillion euros (\$1.08 trillion) for 2021-2027. The bottom line: are they ready to put their money where their mouths are when it comes to European policy ambitions?

With Britain gone from their ranks, the leaders want to prove that Europe can still forge ahead toward brighter horizons and confront major challenges like climate change and an ever-evolving digital economy driven by new technologies and new ways of doing business.

But Brexit has left them with a sizable budget hole; a funding gap that runs to 10-12 billion euros a year, or about 75 billion euros over the seven-year period.

The leaders' challenge is to set aside enough funds to achieve lofty European ide-



German Chancellor Angela Merkel, right, and Sanna Marin, Prime Minister of Finland, address the media during a press conference as part of a meeting at the chancellery in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2020.

Associated Press

als while defending spending decisions in Brussels to taxpayers back home. Slick number crunching, creative accounting and what one senior EU official called "voodoo statistics" are sometimes employed to make the sale.

It's not just about convincing reluctant member countries to stump up funds. The European Parliament must also ratify any final budget agreement and the EU lawmakers are not happy.

"At the moment, we remain €230 billion (\$248 billion) apart," European Par-

liament President David Sassoli said Tuesday, after his latest round of discussions with EU Council President Charles Michel, who will chair the extraordinary budget summit. "We are still far from an acceptable proposal."

After a series of tete-a-tetes with national leaders in recent weeks, some lasting three hours, Michel proposed last Friday to set the budget at 1.074% of EU gross national income. The parliament wants 1.3%, while the EU's powerful executive arm, the European Commission, prefers 1.11%.

In a scathing indictment, Sassoli said the proposal "risks leaving Europe lagging not only behind its own objectives, but also other actors on the international scene, such as China and the U.S." He urged EU leaders to improve the offer "because otherwise the parliament will not be able to accept it."

In the great scheme of things, it's not a big slice of national income. The EU budget is supplemented with customs revenue and money from antitrust fines — and the EU has levied billions worth of those in

recent years. So, individually, countries are paying less than 1% of their annual earnings.

The commission says budget spending should be seen as a contribution fee to one of the world's biggest wealth-generating organizations. It says the advantages that countries get back as members of the largest trading bloc on the planet are worth about 6% on their gross national income.

Still, at over a trillion euros, it's not exactly pocket change.

Ahead of the negotiations, the 27 member nations are roughly divided into two main camps. The so-called "Frugal Four" of Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden versus the "Friends of Cohesion," a group of mainly central and eastern European nations who like to see their contributions return home in the form of "cohesion funds" that help develop Europe's poorer regions.

Ahead of the summit, the frugal four, who would like the budget to drop as low as 1%, rejected Michel's offer in a Financial Times newspaper op-ed, saying that in light of Brexit "we simply have to cut our coat according to our cloth." □



Emergency personnel gather at the scene following a multi-vehicle crash on the south shore of Montreal in La Prairie, Quebec, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2020.

Associated Press

MONTREAL (AP) — Canadian police said Wednesday whiteout conditions that came about suddenly most likely triggered a massive pileup involving about 200 vehicles south of Montreal.

There were no immediate

reports of deaths but Quebec provincial police said about a dozen people were sent to hospital with minor to serious injuries after the midday crash in in La Prairie, Quebec.

Firefighters from La Prairie said two people were still

200 vehicles involved in pileup south of Montreal

trapped Wednesday afternoon and authorities were trying to stabilize a diesel spill before extracting them from the wreckage.

Those two people are considered to be in serious condition.

The crash occurred around 12:30 p.m. on a stretch of Highway 15 that runs along the St. Lawrence River. The pileup of vehicles stretched for about a kilometer.

Transport Minister Francois Bonnardel told reporters in Quebec City the pileup took place in an area where heavy winds come off the river, creating sudden blizzard-like conditions. "People were driving, there

were strong winds ... and, suddenly, you couldn't see anything," Bonnardel said. "And then, well, the pileup started."

Two snow removal operations took place in the area in the hour before the incident, he noted.

Bonnardel said the highway isn't known for particular safety issues and 65,000 vehicles use the south-bound part of it on a daily basis.

The transport minister said he'll await the results of an investigation before deciding if any particular measures need to be taken.

Police spokesman Sgt. Stephane Tremblay said

about 50 vehicles were able to drive away from the collision, but 75 others would need to be towed. Numerous vehicles were mangled, including several large trucks.

About 150 people were taken by bus to a nearby community center for treatment and to be picked up.

Tremblay said police crash experts will study what caused the pileup.

A school bus was also involved in the pileup, but none of the high school students on board were injured, said Andree Laforest, the province's acting public security minister. □

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In this Feb. 18, 2020, photo released by Xinhua News Agency, workers go door to door to check the temperature of residents during a health screening campaign in the Qingheju Community, Qingshan District of Wuhan in central China's Hubei Province. Associated Press

Iran state news agency says new virus has killed 2 citizens

By AMIR VAHDAT
TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The new virus has killed two elderly Iranian citizens, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported Wednesday. IRNA quoted Alireza Vahabzadeh, an adviser to the country's health minister, as saying that both victims had been carrying the coronavirus and were located in Qom, about 140 kilometers (86 miles) south of the capital Tehran. The state news agency said later that schools and universities in Qom would be closed so an investigation could take place. No additional details were released. Earlier on Wednesday, Iranian authorities confirmed two cases of the new virus,

the first in the country, according to the semi-official ISNA news agency. Officials later said the two patients had died. ISNA quoted an official in the country's health ministry, Kiyanoush Jahanpour, as saying that "since last two days, some suspected cases of the new coronavirus were found." The virus causes the illness that the World Health Organization recently named COVID-19, referring to its origin late last year and the coronavirus that causes it. The new virus emerged in China in December. Since then, more than 75,000 people have been infected globally, with more than 2,000 deaths being reported, mostly in China. □



Thousand of farmers converged on The Hague, Netherlands, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2020, in the latest protest against the government's plans to rein in emissions of nitrogen oxide. Associated Press

Dutch farmers protest in The Hague against emissions policy

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Thousands of angry Dutch farmers converged on The Hague on Wednesday in the latest protest against the government's plans to rein in emissions of nitrogen oxide. As tractors poured into the city, the Dutch military parked large trucks across strategic roads to prevent farmers from driving into the business and shopping center. The demonstration comes a day before a debate in parliament on how to rein in emissions of the pollutant nitrogen oxide. Farmers believe they are being disproportionately targeted by lawmakers, saying that aviation, construction and other industries also

are major polluters. Sieta van Keimpema of Farmers Defence Force, which organized the protest, said politicians should listen to farmers, whose plans would reduce emissions while also protecting jobs in the lucrative agriculture sector. "Our government sweeps farmers from the countryside and plants houses on the places where farmers' barns are demolished and memories of agriculture are erased," Van Keimpema said. Ype Reinsma, a farmer who traveled to the protest from the northern province of Friesland, said lawmakers should "give the sector a chance to use far more effective ways to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxide,

which we've already been doing for years," said. "Why is everything aimed at the farmers?" he added. Police issued tickets to a small number of farmers across the Netherlands for driving their tractors on highways and police in The Hague arrested a 33-year-old protester for ignoring their instructions and creating "a dangerous situation on the road." Another man was detained at the end of the protest as police blocked roads to prevent a couple hundred demonstrators approaching the agriculture ministry. In October, thousands of farmers, many driving tractors, descended on The Hague, causing traffic chaos across the country. □

Abbott says top Malaysian leaders suspected pilot of MH370

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott has said the "top levels" of the Malaysian government long suspected that the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 almost six years ago was a mass murder-suicide by the pilot.

Abbott was prime minister when the plane carrying 239 people vanished on March 8, 2014, while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

Australia, working on Malaysia's behalf, coordinated what became the largest search in aviation history, but it failed to find the plane before being ended in 2017.

Speaking in a Sky News documentary to air on Wednesday and Thursday, Abbott said high-ranking Malaysian officials believed veteran pilot Zaharie Ahmad Shah deliberately downed the jet.

"My very clear understanding, from the very top levels of the Malaysian government, is that from very, very early on, they thought it was murder-suicide by the pilot," said Abbott, who was Australia's prime minister from 2013 to 2015.

"I'm not going to say who said what to whom, but let me reiterate, I want to be absolutely crystal clear, it was understood at the highest levels that this was almost certainly murder-suicide by the pilot."

In response, Malaysia's former prime minister and police chief said there was no conclusive proof of pilot



In this Sept. 19, 2014, file photo, former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott speaks during a press conference, in Sydney.

Associated Press

suicide.

Former Prime Minister Najib Razak told the Free Malaysia Today online news portal that a possible pilot suicide was never ruled out but it would be "unfair and legally irresponsible" to pin the blame on Zaharie as the black boxes had not been found.

Malaysian police chief Abdul Hamid Bador, who was one of the investigators, told local media that there was no evidence of Zaharie's involvement and that the plane's disappearance was still a mystery. Former Malaysian Transport Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said in a statement that investigators had "explored every single lead and possibility" but found no con-

clusive answer to why the plane vanished.

A Malaysian-led independent investigation report released in 2018 said the plane's course was changed manually but did not name a suspect and raised the possibility of "intervention by a third party." Investigators, however, said the cause of the disappearance couldn't be determined until the wreckage and the plane's black boxes are found.

Malaysia's Ministry of Transport didn't immediately respond to Abbott's comments. Malaysia has had a change of government since the plane's disappearance, with current Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad ousting Na-

jib, whose party had ruled Malaysia since its independence in 1957.

The pilot's family has long denied he was suicidal. The 2018 investigative report said there was no evidence of abnormal behavior or stress in the two pilots and none of the passengers had pilot training.

Abbott said he did not believe conspiracy theories centered on the Malaysian government, which owns Malaysia Airlines.

"I've read all these stories that the Malaysians allegedly didn't want the murder-suicide theory pursued because they were embarrassed about one of their pilots doing this. I have no reason to accept that," he said.

The Australian-led search scoured 120,000 square kilometers (46,000 square miles) of the southern Indian Ocean and cost 200 million Australian dollars (\$150 million). A private hunt by Texas-based company Ocean Infinity later searched more than 96,000 square kilometers (37,000 square miles) of sea.

Debris that washed ashore in the western Indian Ocean has been confirmed as coming from the missing Boeing 777 and indicated a broad expanse of the ocean where the plane likely crashed after running out of fuel.

Australia, Malaysia and China agreed in 2016 that an official search would only resume if the three countries had credible evidence that identified a specific location for the wreckage. Most of the passengers were Chinese.

Abbott believed a new investigation was warranted. "Let's assume that it was murder-suicide by the pilot and if there is any part of that ocean that could have been reached on that basis that has not yet been explored, let's get out and explore it," he said.

Abbott's comments reopened old wounds for some families.

Jacquita Gomes, whose husband Patrick was a flight attendant on the plane, said it was frustrating that Abbott revealed this six years late.

"Why now? If it's true, for six years, we have been living a lie," she said. □



Jennifer Talbot stands between two agents of the National Bureau of Investigation Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2020 in Manila, Philippines.

Associated Press

U.S. woman who hid baby arrested in Philippines for kidnapping

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— An American woman charged with human trafficking for allegedly attempting to smuggle a 6-day-old baby out of the Philippines inside a sling bag was arrested on an additional count of kidnapping, authorities said.

Jennifer Talbot from Utah, who was out on bail while facing the human trafficking charge, was presented

to reporters in Manila on Wednesday by officials from the National Bureau of Investigation, a government anti-crime investigative agency. Talbot wore an orange shirt and had a mask on, with her left arm in a sling.

She pulled down her mask and said, "I object to this press conference without my attorney and the embassy present."

Talbot had planned to board a Delta Air Lines flight to the United States with the baby on Sept. 4, according to prosecutors. After discovering the baby, airline staff called immigration personnel, who arrested Talbot at the airport. The baby was turned over to government welfare personnel. An initial hearing on the kidnapping charge is scheduled on March 12. □

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In this Feb. 12, 2020 photo, an archaeologist handles ancient bones and vessels from a previous Inca culture that were discovered by workers building a new natural gas line through the Puente Piedra neighborhood of Lima, Peru.

Associated Press

Peru gas workers unearth centuries of history in Lima's soil

By **FRANKLIN BRICEÑO**
Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — For nearly two decades, workers for a company building gas lines across Peru's capital have found themselves unearthing a treasure trove of history.

On one recent afternoon, a team came across four burials accompanied by ceramics from a pre-Incan civilization. Two years earlier, they found the bodies of farmers who had been among the first wave of Chinese immigrants in the 19th century.

"Lima literally sits atop a cultural bank," with one layer of history atop another, said Alexis Solis, one of 40 archaeologists who work for the Calidda national gas company that is installing lines across the city.

The cooperation is a step forward for preservation in

a metropolis whose rapid growth over the past century led to the destruction of many important sites.

Gas line worker Segundo Chávez last year found the body of a child inside a base — a burial characteristic of the pre-Incan Chancay people who flourished from about 1200 to 1470 b— and he recalled how his shouts of discovery attracted nearby residents from their houses.

"It was an ancient burial, 80 centimeters deep," Chavez said as he looked at two other recent discoveries — still unrecovered — in a ditch in a street in the Puente Piedra neighborhood: bones of an adult in a huge vase and the those of a baby found with a ceramic figure of a "Cuchimilco," a sort of guide through the world of the dead in the Chancay culture. □



In this May 7, 2019 file photo, the press surrounds Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro after he signed a second decree that eases gun restrictions at Planalto presidential palace in Brasilia, Brazil.

Associated Press

Bolsonaro repeats debunked sexual comments about journalist

By **DAVID BILLER and MAURICIO SAVARESE**
Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro repeated a debunked sexually charged allegation about one of the country's more prominent journalists on Tuesday, drawing fire from press freedom advocates and even some recent allies.

Bolsonaro referred to Patricia Campos Mello, a reporter for newspaper Folha de S.Paulo who last year won the International Press Freedom Award after coverage of his presidential campaign. She'd also been honored for earlier reporting from the Middle East, U.S. and Africa.

A witness in a congressional hearing testified she had insinuated an offer of sex in

exchange for help with a story that triggered an investigation of Bolsonaro's campaign by Brazil's top electoral court. Her newspaper quickly debunked the assertion by releasing transcripts, screenshots and recordings of their conversations.

Still, Bolsonaro echoed the insinuation as he spoke outside the presidential residence in Brasilia.

"He talked about the journalist's harassment, hitting on him. She wanted a scoop, she wanted to give a scoop, at any price, against me," Bolsonaro said with a smile, using a Portuguese word for "scoop" that can have sexual connotations. That drew laughs from his supporters.

Hours later Bolsonaro spoke to journalists again at the

same spot. "Is there anyone from Folha there? So I sexually attacked your reporter? OK. I don't want to talk to you," he said before walking away.

The Brazilian Press Association issued a statement calling Bolsonaro's comment cowardly and embarrassing to Brazilians.

"This misogynous behavior is undeserving of the office of the President and an affront to the Constitution," the statement said.

Folha, issued a statement calling Bolsonaro's comment an attack to all professional journalists. "He also tars the dignity, the honor and the decorum as stated by the law for the exercise of the presidency," the daily added. Campos Mello declined to comment on Bolsonaro's insult. □

Ending Putin's support of Venezuela no easy feat for U.S.

By **JOSHUA GOODMAN**
and **DARIA LITVINOVA**

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — In October 2016, the head of Russia's largest oil company traveled to the birthplace of Hugo Chávez, in the empty, sweltering plains of Venezuela, to unveil a giant bronze statue of the late socialist leader that he and his longtime friend, Russian President Vladimir Putin, commissioned from a prominent Russian artist.

It was a turning point in the relationship between Russia and Venezuela, and Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin brought with him a 600-year-old choir from a Moscow monastery to celebrate. Speaking to throngs of red-shirted government supporters in fluent Spanish gleaned from his days as a Soviet military translator in Africa, Sechin praised Chávez as a "leader of multi-polarity" and a "symbol of an entire era."

"We have no choice between victory or death," said Sechin, quoting a Venezuelan independence hero to describe the deepening ties between the two U.S. adversaries. "We must achieve victory."

Now the Trump administration wants to break up that blossoming alliance as part of its campaign to oust Chavez's successor, Nicolás Maduro.

On Tuesday, the Treasury Department blocked U.S. companies from doing business with Rosneft Trading SA, accusing the Geneva subsidiary of the Russian state-owned oil giant of providing a critical lifeline to Maduro as he seeks to bypass U.S. sanctions.

For months, U.S. officials have been warning foreign companies that they could face retaliation if they continue to do business with Maduro. Those admonishments have been aimed primarily at Russia, which U.S. officials say handles about 70% of Venezuelan oil transactions that have been rerouted since the Trump administration a year ago made it illegal for Americans to buy crude from Venezuela.



In this Aug. 27, 2018 file photo, Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, listens to Russian Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin during his flight to visit Chernigovets coal mine, in Beryozovsky, Kemerovo region, Russia.

Associated Press

Francisco Monaldi, a Venezuelan oil expert at Rice University in Houston, said the latest actions should send a chill through companies in Spain, China and elsewhere that continue to partner with state-run oil monopoly PDVSA. It could also foretell the ending of a special license for Chevron that has so far exempted the San Ramon, California-based company from having to pull out of the country, where it's a partner in joint ventures with PDVSA that produce about a quarter of the OPEC nation's total production.

"It's no longer the dog barking," said Monaldi. "It's biting now."

PDVSA in a statement condemned what it called "economic assassination" by the U.S. aimed at taking control of Venezuela's oil industry. Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza said the new actions would bolster Venezuela's lawsuit filed against the Trump administration at the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity.

Rosneft operates with PDVSA several oil fields that it acquired after U.S. drillers were forced out by Chavez's nationalization drive.

But as the new, go-to supplier of the country's pariah crude it wins two ways, according to analysts. First,

Rosneft purchases Venezuela's premium Merey 16 crude at a steep discount. It then uses the proceeds from its sale to pay down \$6.5 billion lent to PDVSA since 2014 for the purchase of Russian-made weaponry and other goods.

Meanwhile, refineries along the U.S. Gulf Coast that used to depend on Venezuela's heavy crude have nearly tripled their imports of unfinished Russian petroleum products in the year since sanctions have been in place, according to U.S. Energy Department data.

To avoid complications for customers in China and India, Rosneft has been hiring tankers that try to hide their cargo by turning off their mandatory tracking systems and carrying out risky ship-to-ship transfers off the coast of west Africa and other distant locations.

In the short term, he expects Maduro will have to pay more to find another intermediary to take on the added risk of moving the country's oil. That means his cash-strapped government will have even less money to import scarce food and medical supplies as well as repair the country's crumbling electricity infrastructure. And with storage facilities already at capacity, production that is already at a seven-decade low is likely to fall

even further, he added.

Still, short of a U.S. naval blockade of Venezuelan ports — a military option that the Trump administration has refused to rule out but has shown no sign of pursuing — nobody expects oil sales from the nation sitting atop the world's largest petroleum reserves to dry up completely.

"They can find always find ways to sell it, but it's much harder," said Monaldi.

Even less clear is the impact on the U.S.' goal of engaging Russia to find a solution to Venezuela's year-old political impasse.

The U.S. leads a group of now nearly 60 nations that recognize opposition leader Juan Guaidó as Venezuela's rightful leader following what it considers Maduro's fraudulent 2018 reelection. In turn, Russia has accused the Trump administration of spreading false information to engineer a coup, needling the U.S. in what has traditionally been considered Washington's backyard as the two sides wage proxy battles for influence in Syria, Ukraine and other global hot spots.

Richard Nephew, an energy researcher at Columbia University, said that in sparing Rosneft itself, and only going after one of its many units, the impact on Russia's continued political support for Maduro is likely to be

more muted.

The bulk of Rosneft's long-term supply contracts are arranged directly by the parent company in Moscow, with the Swiss-based trading unit handling spot sales, he said. The sanctions also include a three-month winding down period, which should give the company — and ravenous oil traders — plenty of time to redirect transactions, including with Venezuela.

In addition, Rosneft and Sechin were already partially sanctioned in 2014 in retaliation for Russia's annexation of Crimean peninsula in Ukraine. As a result, many U.S. companies had already been steering clear of the company.

"This seems more like a warning shot designed to look bigger than it actually is," said Nephew, who helped design U.S. sanctions policy while at the State Department under President Barack Obama. "It's shooting someone who is Russian sounding without really punishing the Russians themselves."

Several pro-Putin lawmakers were dismissive of the actions, saying they would appeal to the World Trade Organization to remove what they described as unilateral, unlawful U.S. actions.

"I think this issue can be resolved," Vladimir Dzhubarov, a member of Russia's upper house of parliament, told RIA Novosti news agency. "They're smart over there (in Rosneft) and they will find a way to get around it."

But even if Putin maintains outward support for Maduro, it's unclear if he'll double down and lend even more money to the bankrupt country.

At the height of unrest in 2018, anti-government protesters tried to destroy the Chávez statue dedicated by Russia. Today, it's under heavy guard, pointing to the uneasy calm that prevails in the normally pro-government Venezuelan countryside, where power outages are an almost daily occurrence and misery widespread. □

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The Krosshart Project: Putting Their Stamp on Aruban Arts and Culture

ORANJESTAD — On February 1st 2020 the official launch of the Krosshart project emerged on the Aruba. A groundbreaking and innovative initiative by two young and talented Aruban musicians who have dared to envision the evolution of traditional Aruban music. Like Plato states, “music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything”. Aruba in its essence is filled with cultural and musical traditions that have anchored the artistic foundation of the island. Traditions that have made us unique in the world and traditions that have carried our identity over the decades. From the synergies between Afro-European cultural and musical influences we now have our own Dande, and our own interpretation of musical genres such as the Tumba, Wals, Mazurka, Polka and so on. Now, well into the 21st century we have reached a point of a “cultural disconnect” between the older and young generation.

A “cultural disconnect” in the sense that there seems to be a challenge of diffusing Aruban cultural traditions to the next generation. There are numerous theories and explanations for this, but the essence and the priority should be to reduce this disconnect. Throughout the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, the outlook remains on finding the sweet spot between preserving as much as we can, while also stimulating innovation. So, in this positive spirit of finding a solution, let's highlight this cutting-edge project, so continue reading and see how you can be part of it as well.

Krosshart Project

The krosshart is a concept created by Siegfried Hart and Chris Kross approximately 8



years ago. Since then, they have played numerous times at The Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival and been involved in various cultural developments on the island. As time passed, this became a family of ingenious minds collaborating to express their vision and play part in the further development of the Aruban musical heritage. In the meantime, they both crossed Aruban borders to pursue their education (in music), Chris Kross in the United States and Siegfried Hart in the Netherlands.

According to the Krosshart project, each generation is responsible to put their stamp on the local artistic and cultural evolution within the community. This project's vision is to achieve this by innovating Aruban traditional music by combining multiple Aruban genres together and with other genres as well, without disrupting their fundamental rhythms. “This is done by using primary parts of each genre that fits together and the experimentation with rhythm, harmony, orchestration and sound design. Creating new sub-genres with diversity in rhythm and color. Genres we experiment with: Dansa, Wals, Tambu, Tumba, Seu, Soca, Hip Hop, Jazz, Classical music, Bossa nova, Candomble rhythm, Calypso, Zoukous”.

Now both these musicians are collaborating with other Aruban talents who are Lidrick Solognier, Jose Croeze and, many other musicians to create this innovative album.

Continued on Page 14



The Krosshart Project: Putting Their Stamp on Aruban Arts and Culture

Continued from Page 13

Considering the dynamic nature of the arts, this album will be enriched with synergies between traditional and modern genres, rhythms, and constellations aiming at preserving Aruban musical tradition and culture for the future generations. In the same way, the past generation of inspiring musicians made history, for example; Rufo Wever, Padu, Rudy Plaate, Macai, Doble R, Randal Corsen, Hildward Croes, Ivan Jansen, the Krosshart project hopes to contribute in their own capacity, creativity, talent, passion, and ultimately love for the Aruban culture towards safeguarding our musical and cultural heritage.

The focus behind the Krosshart concept is to educate and create awareness, especially the younger generation, on the Aruban musical tradition, culture, and heritage. Also, to inspire other musicians to use their own traditional genres and rhythms in such a way that they are open to the experimentation, exploration, and expansion of musical possibilities to further revolutionize them with the sole intent to preserve cultural heritage.

The addition, the Krosshart projects hopes to serve as an example of evolution of the traditional music of the ABC islands but also to create a more attractive sound for the younger generations and other genres enthusiasts. This project will directly benefit our musical

tradition and culture by preserving its core aspect by innovating the sound.

Therefore, expanding the reach and potential of our traditional musical aspects, does not only reach

ones that studied music at an academic level and the self-taught musicians, will be faced.

We are playing the music of all styles and using all types of musi-

together and put our differences aside and make more meaningful music".

Contact and Support

The Creative Islander would like to wish Chris Kross, Siegfried Hart, and the entire recording team much success with this new endeavor. The Aruban society and Music Industry will truly benefit from this innovative and daring project. Music is for everyone and should evolve for the future generation.

For any questions regarding the crowdfunding campaign or Krosshart project, feel free to contact them through email at krosshart.project@gmail.com or by visiting their website at <http://krosshart.com/>.

They are also present on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

Are you inspired and would like to donate and support this project? Feel free to place your contribution on their go fund me page on the following link: gofundme.com/krosshart.

For convenience, contributions are also welcome on the following Aruban bank account:

RBC Royal Bank
Harmony Academy and Scholarship
Account number
7700000100221751
Lago Heightstraat 5
San Nicolaas, Aruba ☐



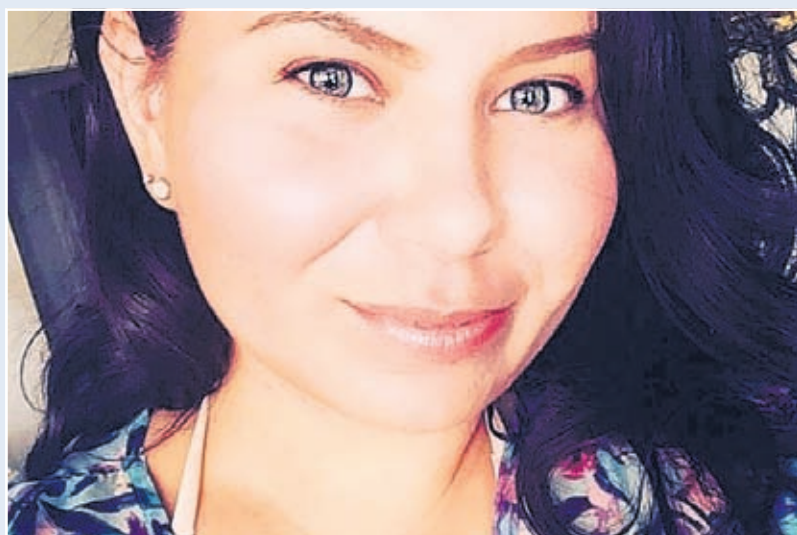
the Caribbean but opens the door to the world. Moreover, this will be beneficial to the youth and up and coming artists of the Dutch Caribbean, as inspiration to experiment more with local, traditional and cultural sounds.

Also, the well-known segregation between musicians, meaning the

cians, academics and self-taught. This promotes inclusion and collaboration within the Aruban Music Industry.

At the end of the day, it is all about the music and the Aruban people who uplift it.

The Krosshart project confirmed this by stating: "we need to come



Biography - Thaïs G. Franken (24) is a recently graduated Aruban student at the University of Maastricht (UM). She obtained her graduate double master of science degree in Public Policy and Human Development in collaboration with the United Nations University Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT). Back home, on the beautiful island of Aruba, she completed her Bachelor of Arts in Organization, Governance & Management (OGM) at the University of Aruba (UA), where she successfully defended her thesis titled "Placing Culture and Creativity at the Heart of the Aruban Sustainable Development". It was precisely this research project that inspired the emergence of the "Creative Islander" column in 2018. Thaïs is very passionate about topics such as sustainability, innovation, culture, creativity, social entrepreneurship and their role in public management. Next to her academic interests, she enjoys reading, writing, dancing and cooking.

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Honorary titles to Honorary guests

EAGLE BEACH — Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative, Marouska Heyliger, had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki"

for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 35+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees were: **Melinda Norris** and **Janet Klein** from Kentucky who received the Distinguished Visitors certificate.

Audrey Bohannon and **Gina Bohannon** honored as Goodwill Ambassadors and Emerald Ambassador



from New Jersey, **Patricia Falco**.

The honorees stated that they love coming to the island with family and friends. They love vacationing here because of the hospitality of the island, beautiful beaches and great weather.

For the Aruba Tourism Authority and the staff at Divi Tamarijn it was an honor to have presented these guests with their honorary

title and look forward on having them over for many years to come at their home away from home. □



Fall in love with The Restaurant at Tierra del Sol!



NOORD — Tierra del Sol Resort & Golf is proud to invite you to Aruba's first "Premium Casual" dining experience at the newly designed restaurant at Tierra del Sol. The spectacular new design showcases a fashionable color scheme with modern furniture, an expanded outdoor terrace, and a bar overlooking Aruba's beautiful Caribbean Sea and their Robert Trent Jones II golf course.

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ORANJESTAD — Aruba Airport Authority N.V. (AAA) proudly announces that Queen Beatrix International Airport was presented with the new Route Exchange Award at Routes Americas 2020 Award night this past February 5, 2020 during the Routes Americas confer-

ence held in Indianapolis. This award was presented in recognition of its excellence in digital marketing efforts and airline engagement via the Route Exchange Platform.

"We are deeply honored to win the first Route Ex-

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The Commercial and Marketing Team (Air Service Development and PR) is excited with this Award - and the fact that our hard work, dedication, innovation

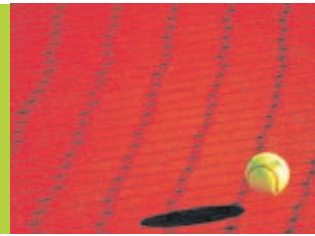


and diversity of approach across the Americas has been recognized by our outstanding airline partners and Routes Americas organization. Our success has truly been the creative synergistic diverse climate cultivated within the unit to be able to gain and maintain a competitive differential advantage. By engaging and connecting with our target audience through different types of communication platforms.

"Routes Americas has once again proven to be a valuable asset to complement our air service development strategy.

The event delivered our airport unparalleled access to over 20 airlines with important airline decision makers, giving us the additional platform to showcase our route development cases" said AAA's Air Service Development Manager Mrs. Jo-Anne Meaux-Arends. ☐

SPORTS



Cleveland Cavaliers head coach John Beilein watches in the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Clippers, Sunday, Feb. 9, 2020, in Cleveland. The Clippers won 133-92.

Associated Press

Beilein resigns as Cavaliers coach after failed NBA run

By TOM WITHERS
AP Sports Writer
INDEPENDENCE, Ohio (AP)

— John Beilein didn't make it through one NBA season. Another college coaching dropout.

Wildly successful at Michigan and other stops in his coaching career, Beilein resigned Wednesday after just 54 games with the rebuilding Cavaliers, who can't seem to find the right person to lead their team. The 67-year-old Beilein never got comfortable during his short stint in the pro game. The demands of travel, lack of practice time and a group of players who didn't respect him or respond to his coaching style proved to be too much, so he decided to move on before the team returned from the All-Star break.

Continued on page 20



Svechnikov, Niederreiter help Hurricanes beat Predators 4-1

Carolina Hurricanes center Sebastian Aho (20), of Finland, celebrates after scoring against the Nashville Predators during the third period of an NHL hockey game Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2020, in Nashville, Tenn. The Hurricanes won 4-1.

Associated Press
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Rory McIlroy delivers strong rejection to proposed new tour

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Rory McIlroy became the first top player to publicly reject the idea of a proposed new tour, saying he values his choice of where to play over whatever money the Premier Golf League is promising.

"I would like to be on the right side of history on this one," McIlroy said Wednesday at the Mexico Championship.

McIlroy said the only thing that could change his mind were if all the top players decided to join, and he doesn't see that happening.

"I think it's very split at the moment," he said.

Talk of a Premier Golf League has been around for about six years and picked up momentum — along with serious funding, primarily from Saudi Arabia — in recent months. Organizers have been talking to players and agents the last few months in the Bahamas, Australia and last week in Los Angeles.

Phil Mickelson, who played with officials involved during the pro-am in the Saudi International last month, said Sunday he was not ready to announce his intentions but might be ready to state his view publicly by The Players Championship. Tiger Woods has said only that he and his people were looking into it.

The idea of the Premier Golf League is to invigorate golf by putting together 12 four-man teams that would be required to play 18 events — 10 of them in the U.S. — that feature 54 holes, no



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, chips onto the second green during the final round of the Genesis Invitational golf tournament at Riviera Country Club, Sunday, Feb. 16, 2020, in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles.

Associated Press

cut and a shotgun start to fit a five-hour broadcast window. Total prize money would be \$240 million, and the top player could earn as much as \$50 million.

McIlroy said money is "cheap."

"Money is the easy part," McIlroy said. "It shouldn't be the driving factor. Look, for some people it is. And we're professional golfers and we're out here playing golf to make a living. But at the end of the day, I value my freedom and my autonomy over everything else."

PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan sent a memo to players last month that effectively said that because

the tour has contracts with title sponsors for a full schedule and television partners, anyone joining the Premier Golf League would have to give up their PGA Tour memberships.

The Premier Golf League's schedule would not include the majors. And still to be determined is if the Official World Golf Ranking board — represented by major tours and golf organizations — would allow the league to get ranking points. The world ranking is used to help determine the field for majors.

For someone like Woods — the biggest draw in golf — to play in the new league, he might be required to

play as often as 22 times a year if the league has an 18-tournament schedule.

"Tiger is 44. He's got two young kids," McIlroy said. "He openly said last week he wants to play 12 times a year, so this league is proposing 18. So he's not going to do it."

When first asked about the new league at Torrey Pines last month, McIlroy said golf was entering a new era and the Premier Golf League proposal had exploited a few areas of weakness, without detailing what they were.

While he said then he didn't believe it was the best way to go, McIlroy suggested it could be a "catalyst for

some changes on this tour that can help it grow and move forward." As an example, he mentioned rewarding top players.

He left no doubt where he stood on Wednesday.

"The more I've thought about it, the more I don't like it," he said. "The one thing as a professional golfer in my position that I value is the fact that I have autonomy and freedom over everything that I do."

He used the World Golf Championships in Mexico as an example. Eight players from the top 50, including Woods and Brooks Koepka, decided not to play this week.

"If you go and play this other golf league, you're not going to have that choice," he said. "I've never been one for being told what to do, and I like to have that autonomy and freedom over my career, and I feel like I would give that up by going to play this other league."

"For me, I'm out," he said. "My position is I'm against it until there may come a day that I can't be against it. If everyone else goes, I might not have a choice. But at this point, I don't like what they're proposing."

McIlroy referenced Arnold Palmer speaking out against Greg Norman's proposed world tour from the 1990s, in which the top 30 players in the world would meet at locations around the world. From that uprising, the PGA Tour developed the World Golf Championships in 1999, which brought together the top players from six tours around the world.

Sun acquire January, send Williams to Dream in 3-way deal

UNCASVILLE, Conn. (AP)

— The Connecticut Sun acquired guard Briann January from Phoenix on Wednesday in a three-way deal that sent fan favorite Courtney Williams to the Atlanta Dream.

The Sun also get a second-round draft pick from the Mercury.

Phoenix received 6-foot-

2 forward Jessica Breland and 6-1 forward Nia Coffey from Atlanta.

The 33-year-old January, who has been named to the WNBA's All-Defensive team six times, averaged 6.5 points and 3.3 assists in 33 games for Phoenix last season.

Williams, 25, averaged 13.2 points in helping Connecti-

cut reach the Finals last season.

"What fans will love the most about Courtney is the joy and passion they will see every time she steps out on the court," Atlanta coach Nicki Collen said.

Connecticut Sun coach and general manager Curt Miller made it clear that Williams wanted the

trade.

"Unfortunately, despite our best efforts and all the loyalty and support we've shown Courtney over the last four seasons, it became clear she no longer wanted to return to Connecticut," he said. "I will look back fondly on the memories we created together, but my focus as always is

with the players that have a burning desire to help the Connecticut Sun hang the franchise's first championship banner."

Breland, a shot blocking specialist, 32 on Sunday, averaged 7.5 points and 6.0 rebounds last season. Coffee, 24, averaged 5 points and 2.8 rebounds in 2019 for Atlanta.

Hinchcliffe gets Indy 500 ride, 3 total races with Andretti

By **MICHAEL MAROT**

AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Michael Andretti's driver lineup is locked and loaded for May.

He already had two race winners, two of IndyCar's rising stars and his own son, Marco, geared up. Now he's added 2016 Indianapolis 500 pole winner James Hinchcliffe to the roster.

Andretti Autosport's team owner announced Wednesday that Hinchcliffe will drive the No. 29 Honda for three races this season — the two in Indy and a June race at Texas Motor Speedway with the potential for more opportunities in the future.

"We've run six cars before," Andretti said at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. "And when you put a driver like James in a car, that's like another bullet in the gun. We've got our six-shooter now."

Andretti's sixth car will be sponsored by Indianapolis-based Genesys, which sells customer experience and call center technology. The addition of Hinchcliffe should resonate with fans, too.

The popular Canadian had been scrambling to find races to run in 2020 after learning late last year he was out at Arrow McLaren SP with one year left on his contract. Hinchcliffe spent five seasons with Sam Schmidt's team but became a casualty of Schmidt's new alliance with McLaren.

In January, Hinchcliffe cobbled together enough funding to run the road race at Indy as well as the 500 but needed a team to give him a seat. Hinchcliffe wound up reuniting with Andretti, where he worked for three seasons and earned his first series win in 2013. Plus, he added a third race.

Hinchcliffe should be a perfect fit in a crowded garage that already consisted of Ryan Hunter-Reay, the 2014 Indy 500 winner; Alexander Rossi, the 500 champion in 2016; 19-year-old Colton Herta, a two-time winner as a rookie in 2019; 25-year-

old Zach Veach, who has eight top 10 finishes in 34 starts as a full-time IndyCar driver; and five-time pole winner Marco Andretti. The Andretti team also has a technical alliance with Michael Shank Racing for the entry being fielded for Jack Harvey.

Hinchcliffe is expected to make his first appearance at the speedway during an April 29 test.

"I know a lot of the engineering staff, I'm personal friends with the drivers on the team and I'm going to be very committed to getting myself up to speed so I can hit the track running in May," Hinchcliffe said. "I think one of the most important things is come to Indianapolis with a purpose and I think this team does

that every May. No matter how many cars they have, they make sure they are all competitive."

Hinchcliffe qualified second twice and ninth in his three previous 500 starts with Andretti but finished in the top 20 only once during those years — a career best sixth in 2012.

In 2015, his first year with Schmidt, Hinchcliffe suffered a life-threatening leg injury in a crash during practice. He missed the rest of the season. When he returned to the track in May 2016, Hinchcliffe claimed his first — and only — career pole. He finished seventh in the race.

Two years later, Hinchcliffe shockingly failed to qualify for the race after getting bumped off the traditional



In this May 28, 2016, file photo, James Hinchcliffe, right, of Canada, talks with Marco Andretti during the drivers meeting for the Indianapolis 500 auto race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indianapolis.

Associated Press

33-car starting grid. Some fans wanted Hinchcliffe to buy his way into the race, but no deal materialized and Hinchcliffe contended he didn't want to take any-

one else's ride.

He returned last year and barely surviving Bump Day with the No. 32 starting spot in his final May race with Schmidt. □

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Please note: Buy in for \$200 or more & receive extra \$20 bonus, one hour minimum play.

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Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: Hook and Cook your Own Fish!



Oranjestad- Renaissance Marina Downtown is home to the Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fishermen of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood. Herby senior and Herby Junior both share a passion and love for fishing. They know what the local waters have to offer and what fresh fish really means. Over 30 years ago, the idea for the fishing charter was born.

Captain Herby would catch the fish to be served at the restaurant the same day. That concept still lives, what is 'hooked' during the day is cooked in the evening at the restaurant.

Herby shares his experience with his crew, who take out guests daily on their tournament rigged 35ft twin engine

Bertram "Driftwood" or on their more spacious 37ft twin engine Bertram called "Living Easy". Both yachts are available for charters from 8am to 12 noon, or from 1 to 5pm (6-hour trips also available). To book a fishing charter visit www.driftwoodfishingcharters.com or call Herbert direct at (297)-5924040.



Have an authentic seafood dining experience at Driftwood Restaurant, situated in the characteristic downtown Oranjestad. This comfortable downtown restaurant has a long tradition (30 years) of serving the freshest fish, the biggest shrimp, and the most succulent Caribbean Lobster.

Opening Hours: 5:00pm to 10:30pm (closed on Sundays)

For reservations visit www.driftwoodaruba.com or call (297)-5832515

Address: Klipstraat 12. Oranjestad, Aruba

Continued from page 17

"This was a very difficult decision for me, but I want to be clear — this was my decision to step down and I truly appreciate the understanding and support of the front office during this time," Beilein said in a statement released by the team. "I find losing very challenging and this year has taken a much bigger toll on me than I expected. I grew concerned for the consequences this toll could potentially take on my own health and my family's well-being down the road.

"I was not certain I could be at my best for the remainder of the season and in the future. That would not be fair to the players, coaches and support staff." The Cavs went just 14-40 under Beilein, who the Cavaliers signed to a five-year contract last May. The team said he will be reassigned to a different role within the organization.

Associate head coach J.B. Bickerstaff will take over on an interim basis for Beilein. Bickerstaff had become the



In this Friday, Dec. 20, 2019 file photo, Cleveland Cavaliers head coach John Beilein gives instructions to players in the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Memphis Grizzlies in Cleveland.

Associated Press

preferred sounding board for Cleveland's players and he has head coaching experience after nearly two full seasons in Memphis and one with Houston.

Bickerstaff took over the Rockets 11 games into the 2015-16 season when Kevin McHale was fired. He led them to a 37-34 record and a playoff appearance, but took his name out of consideration to be the next

full-time Houston coach after the season.

Almost from the start of training camp there were issues for Beilein in Cleveland. The Cavs didn't embrace Beilein's practice methods — he had his big men doing grade-school level fundamental "Mikan" drills — and players grumbled that he was treating them like kids and not paid professionals.

All the losing had an effect on Beilein, who more than once acknowledged he was feeling beaten down by his team's struggles.

Beilein said he wouldn't be stepping down if the Cavs didn't have a succession plan in place with Bickerstaff. Beilein is also looking forward to the chance to reconnect with his family.

"For 45 years and more than 1,300 games, my journey as a basketball coach has been a dream come true," he said. "I have never been afraid of a challenge and have given each one my all — sometimes to the detriment of my own well-being."

Cavs general manager Koby Altman stood by Beilein throughout his tenure. But as the All-Star break approached, it became evident that a change was necessary in order to salvage a season that from the start was devoted to developing the Cavs' core of young talent, which includes guards Collin Sexton and Darius Garland along with forwards Larry Nance

Jr. and Cedi Osman.

Beilein is not the first high-profile college coach to flop in the NBA. Kentucky's John Calipari, Rick Pitino, Tim Floyd, Mike Montgomery and P.J. Carlesimo are among a group who found coaching at the highest level problematic.

"While it's unexpected, we understand and respect his decision to step down as head coach of the Cavaliers," Altman said. "I was excited about the development of our young players, who have all shown growth and maturity under coach Beilein. ... The NBA is a unique business that sometimes requires aggressive risk-taking on important long-term decisions to move a franchise forward and ultimately compete for championships."

Beilein's departure continues a troubling pattern for the Cavs, who have been plagued by coaching instability and nearly constant change over the past few years. Bickerstaff is Cleveland's seventh coach since 2013. □

Crosby's four points leads Penguins past Maple Leafs, 5-2

By The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Sidney Crosby had a goal and three assists to help the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the Toronto Maple Leafs 5-2 on Tuesday night.

Bryan Rust had a goal and two assists, and Jason Zucker, Teddy Blueger and Anthony Angello also scored as Pittsburgh moved past Washington into first place in the Metropolitan Division. Tristan Jarry stopped 34 shots while picking up his 13th win in his last 17 games.

Auston Matthews scored his 43rd goal for the Maple Leafs and Kyle Clifford scored his seventh of the season and first since he was acquired in a trade with the Los Angeles Kings. Frederik Andersen stopped 19 shots for Toronto, and has allowed 13 goals in his last three starts.

BLUES 3, DEVILS 0

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Ivan Barbashev scored twice and St. Louis snapped a season-worst five-game losing streak.

Jaden Schwartz also scored and Jordan Binnington made 17 saves for his seventh career shutout and second this season as the defending Stanley Cup champions and Western Conference leaders won for the first time since Feb. 4.

Louis Domingue made 36 saves for the Devils, who were shut out for the seventh time this season.

FLYERS 5, BLUE JACKETS 1

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Travis Konecny had a goal and two assists, and Philadelphia beat Columbus.

Kevin Hayes, Sean Couturier, Philippe Myers and Jakub Voracek also scored for the Flyers (33-20-7, 73 points), who moved a point ahead of Columbus (30-19-12, 72 points) and into third place in the Metropolitan Division with the win.

Oliver Bjorkstrand scored for the Blue Jackets, who lost their sixth straight. Philadelphia won despite setting a season low with 15 shots on goal. The Flyers' Carter Hart stopped 28 of 29 shots.

HURRICANES 4, PREDATORS 1

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Andrei Svechnikov and Nino Niederreiter each scored in the second period, and Jordan Staal and Sebastian Aho also scored.

Justin Williams had two assists as Carolina won its fourth straight in Nashville. Goalie Petr Mrazek made 28 saves and improved to 9-1-0 against the Predators. Ryan Johansen scored a goal for the Predators, who snapped a three-game winning streak. Nashville hasn't won four straight since October.

JETS 6, KINGS 3

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Blake Wheeler had two goals and an assist in his 700th game with the franchise and Winnipeg beat Los Angeles.

Nikolaj Ehlers had a goal and two assists and Patrik Laine scored a goal into



Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby (87) puts a shot behind Toronto Maple Leafs goaltender Frederik Andersen (31) for a goal during the second period of an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh, Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2020.

Associated Press

an empty net and added one assist. Jansen Harkins and Mason Appleton also scored, and Connor Hellebuyck stopped 31 shots.

Dustin Brown scored twice and Martin Frk also had a goal for the Kings, who were coming off two straight wins. Calvin Petersen finished with 28 saves.

RED WINGS 4, CANADIENS 3

DETROIT (AP) — Andreas Athanasiou scored his second goal with 5:15 remaining in regulation to cap Detroit's three-goal third period.

Detroit swept the season series against the Canadiens, earning four of its NHL-low 15 victories against

them. Red Wings goaltender Jonathan Bernier did not give up a goal in the third period and finished with 19 saves.

Nate Thompson and Jeff Petry scored to give Montreal a 2-0 lead in the first period and Nick Suzuki's goal put it ahead 3-1 after two periods.

SENATORS 7, SABRES 4

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Artem Anisimov and Jean-Gabriel Pageau had two goals each to lead Ottawa. Vladislav Namestnikov, Drake Batherson and Anthony Duclair also scored for Ottawa on a night the Senators retired Chris Phillips' jersey in a pregame

ceremony. Craig Anderson stopped 23 shots to pick up his 200th win with the franchise and move into a tie with Boston's Tuukka Rask for 40th place all-time with 287 career wins.

Brandon Montour had two goals, and Kyle Okposo and Victor Olofsson also scored for the Sabres. Carter Hutton finished with 33 saves as Buffalo snapped a three-game win streak.

After falling behind 2-0 midway through the first, the Senators scored four times in a span of 3 1/2 minutes to take the lead.

Buffalo pulled within one twice, but couldn't tie it again. □

Top-seeded Simona Halep advances at Dubai Championships

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Top-seeded Simona Halep's first match since losing to Garbine Muguruza in the Australian Open semifinals was a tough 1-6, 6-2, 7-6 (7) win over Ons Jabeur at the Dubai Championships on Wednesday.

Halep saved a match point in the two-hour match against Jabeur, who lost to eventual champion Sofia Kenin in the quarterfinals at

the Australian Open.

"It was like a football match or a Fed Cup match, I didn't really realize what was going on on court," said Halep. "Everyone was with a lot of energy so we had to give our best. I think it was a great match."

Halep will meet Aryna Sabalenka in the quarterfinals after Sabalenka beat Elise Mertens 6-4, 6-3. Anett Kontaveit beat Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 7-6 (5),

7-5 and will play Petra Martic, who defeated Barbora Strycova 6-3, 6-3. Elena Rybakina beat Katerina Sinikova 6-3, 6-3 and plays Karolina Pliskova in the quarterfinals. Pliskova beat Kristina Mladenovic 6-1 6-2. In the last quarterfinal match-up, Jennifer Brady will play Muguruza. Brady beat Marketa Vondrousova 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 and Muguruza defeated Veronika Kudermetova 7-5 4-6 6-4. □



Romania's Simona Halep returns the ball to Tunisia's Ons Jabeur during a match of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2020.

Berhalter made almost as much as Ellis in his 1st few months



In this Friday, May 24, 2019 file photo, Jill Ellis, coach of the United States women's national soccer team, speaks to reporters during a news conference in New York.

Associated Press

By **RONALD BLUM**

NEW YORK (AP) — Newly hired American men's soccer coach Gregg Berhalter earned nearly as much from the U.S. Soccer Federation in the fiscal year ending last March 31 as women's counterpart Jill Ellis. Berhalter, hired on Dec. 2, 2018, had compensation of \$304,113 from the USSF in the year ending March 31, according to the tax return

released by the federation on Wednesday. That figure included a \$200,000 signing bonus. Ellis, who took over as women's coach in May 2014, had compensation of \$390,409 in the fiscal year. She went on to lead the Americans to their second straight World Cup title, was voted FIFA Women's Coach of the Year, then left in October. Any bonus

she earned as a result of the title likely will be listed on the next year's tax return. Her base salary was raised to \$500,000 in late 2018, a person with knowledge of her contract told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the USSF has not announced that. The USSF has said she was the highest-paid women's

coach in the world. Tab Ramos, who was the men's under-20 team coach before leaving in October to become coach of Major League Soccer's Houston Dynamo, outearned Ellis with compensation of \$460,772. Ellis did earn more than Earnie Stewart (\$291,667), hired as men's general manager in June 2018, and Dave Sarachan (\$241,869), interim men's national team coach from October 2017 until Berhalter was hired. Jürgen Klinsmann, fired as men's coach in November 2016, was paid \$1,475,000 on Feb. 1, 2018. He received \$3,354,167 in the year ending March 31, 2018. Bruce Arena, who replaced Klinsmann and led the men's team through its failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, was not listed on the latest return. He received \$1,249,348 in the year ending March 31, 2018, which included what was listed on that return as a \$300,000 settlement. Earnings were listed for several of the players on the U.S. women team, includ-

ing Alex Morgan and Carli Lloyd (both \$313,390), Crystal Dunn (\$312,142), Lindsey Horan (\$304,142) and Julie Ertz, Alyssa Naeher and Megan Rapinoe (all \$304,140). Their salaries ranged from \$164,642 to \$171,140 and include \$100,000 for time with the national team. The remainder is what the federation pays for the time with clubs in the National Women's Soccer League. Bonuses were from \$133,000 to \$146,000 and include per match fees and the payment for qualifying for the 2019 World Cup. Women's national team players have filed a gender discrimination lawsuit against the USSF that is scheduled for trial starting May 5 in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. The top two salaries of the administrative staff were chief executive officer Dan Flynn (\$899,440) and chief commercial and strategy officer Jay Berhalter (\$779,765), the coach's brother. Flynn retired in September and the federation said Jay Berhalter is leaving at the end of February. □

Virologist: Tokyo Olympics probably couldn't be held now

By **STEPHEN WADE**

TOKYO (AP) — A respected Japanese virologist on Wednesday said if the Tokyo Olympics were tomorrow, the games probably couldn't be held because of the fast-spreading virus from Wuhan, China. "We need to find the best way to have a safe Olympics," Dr. Hitoshi Oshitani said, speaking at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan. "Right now we don't have an effective strategy, and I think it may be difficult to have the Olympics (now). But by the end of July we may be in a different situation." The local Tokyo Olympic organizing committee and the International Olympic Committee have repeatedly said over the last few weeks that they are following the advice of the World Health Organization and that the games will go on.



Hitoshi Oshitani, Professor of Department of Virology, Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine, speaks during a press conference in Tokyo, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2020.

Associated Press

But with every passing day, the impact of the virus seems to spread, and so does the fallout: Olympic qualifying events are canceled or postponed, travel gets difficult, and athletes and families are left wondering. Not to mention sponsors and broadcast-

ing networks that have invested billions of dollars in the Olympics. The modern Olympics dating from 1896 have only been canceled during wartime, and in 1980 and 1984 they went on with boycotts. Oshitani, a former adviser

with the WHO who worked on the SARS outbreak almost 20 years ago, was hopeful but sowed some uncertainty about the July 24-Aug. 9 Olympics. "I'm not sure (of) the situation in Japan at the end of July," he said, answering in English. "But probably we will not have large outbreaks in Japan in July." Oshitani said he was most concerned about a "Wuhan-type" of outbreak taking place in Africa or other parts of Asia and having cases imported into Japan. He said if that happened "it may get difficult to have" the Olympics. But he also suggested Japan might be able to handle it. "So what we have to do now is try to prevent such a thing from happening," he added, saying the Japanese government should support countries so they don't have "that kind of

situation." The viral outbreak has infected more than 75,000 people globally. China has reported 2,004 deaths among 74,185 cases on the mainland, mostly in the central province of Hubei. Only one death in Japan has been attributed to the virus. Earlier in the week, Shigeru Omi, a former regional director of the WHO and an infectious disease expert from Japan, also said he could not be sure about the Olympics. "Whether the outbreak will last until the Olympic date or not depends upon the virus and the societal effort and joint international community," he said at a news conference. "Nobody can predict whether we can contain the virus or put an end to this outbreak before the Olympics start. That's anybody's guess." □

Wilder-Fury II a fight so big it took 2 TV networks to show

LAS VEGAS (AP) — To hear the fighters talk, the heavy-weight title fight Saturday night between Deontay Wilder and Tyson Fury is so big it took two TV networks to make it happen.

That's only partially true, though it might be forgiven. This is boxing, after all, and a bit of hyperbole goes a long way toward selling a fight.

What is true is that ESPN and Fox Sports had to come together if the heavyweight showdown at the MGM Grand hotel was to happen. And it's also true that both networks are blanketing the airwaves this week like never before in an effort to get people to dig into their pockets for the \$79.99 it will cost to watch the fight at home.

In the end the attention being paid the fight is good for a sport — and a heavy-weight division — that is suddenly a mainstay again on America's sports networks.

"Quite frankly this hasn't happened in a long time. We believe this sport is on the right path," said Bill Wanger, executive vice president of programming, research and content strategy for Fox Sports. "It continues the evolution of our boxing program with PBC (Premier Boxing Champions) where we're mounting a charge to bring boxing back to the masses and create stars out of these



Deontay Wilder, left, arrives at the MGM Grand ahead of his WBC heavyweight championship boxing match; and Tyson Fury, of England, right, arrives at the MGM Grand on Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2020, in Las Vegas.



Associated Press

fighters."

To be sure, Wilder and Fury were already stars in their sport. The two fought to a draw 14 months ago in an entertaining fight in Los Angeles, and they're both unbeaten and arguably the two best heavyweights in the world at the moment. But the constant drumbeat of programming by both networks in the days leading up to the fight — ESPN is even running a special produced by Fox — should make both fighters more well known outside of their sport. It also will make them much wealthier if the pay-per-view buys are anywhere near the level of publicity.

"There's never been a fight ever that's been publicized like this," said Bob Arum, the fight's co-promoter who has been promoting fights since Muhammad Ali was

in his prime. "I mean we even had two Super Bowl commercials, when did that happen?"

For fight week that means interviews and shows previewing the clash and the broadcast of Wednesday's pre-fight news conference on both ESPN2 and Fox Sports 1. The networks will also both air Friday's weigh-in, the press conference in the ring after the fight and a portion of the undercard itself.

To get the main event, though, will not be cheap. Both networks are counting on the massive publicity to prompt people into inviting a few friends over and splurging on the fight.

While neither network is willing to predict just how many households the fight will do (Arum says he's hoping to get near 2 million buys), it will likely be the big-

gest boxing pay-per-view since Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. teamed up — in another network cross-promotion — to sell 4.6 million for their 2015 fight.

"We don't talk about projections but what I can say is that this fight has captured the attention and imagination of not only boxing fans but casual sports fans," said Matt Kenny, vice president of programming and acquisitions for ESPN. "Both of these fighters have shown an ability to really transcend the sport."

So far, though, neither has shown the ability so far to sell pay-per-views in large numbers, which makes projections tricky. Their first fight did a little more than 300,000 buys on Showtime, though at the time few in America knew much about Fury.

The networks aren't just combining to promote and show the fight from the MGM Grand hotel in Las Vegas. Ordinarily heated rivals competing against each other for event rights and viewers, they're also teaming up on the production and mixing their talent for the actual broadcast. The formula worked for Showtime and HBO for the Mayweather-Pacquiao fight, and while the heavy-weight fight will not come close to their record it's got a real chance to crack the million mark and inch toward the 1.9 million heavy-weight record sold for Mike Tyson's second fight with Evander Holyfield in 1997 and his 2002 fight with Lennox Lewis.

"We've merged the two biggest TV networks in the world to make our fight happen," Fury said. "That's what it's about, getting it out so people think they know it and recognize it. So if these two can't do a good job promoting the fight we've got no chance." With both men being noted talkers, it also didn't take much convincing to get them to constantly talk up the fight.

"I've got two guys who are great salesmen and they have sold this fight the way a fight should be sold," Arum said. "They're showing boxing is back, and not just as a niche sport anymore." □

Redskins exercise 2020 option on RB Adrian Peterson

ASHBURN, Va. (AP) — The Washington Redskins exercised Adrian Peterson's 2020 option Wednesday, keeping the veteran running back in the fold for another season. Peterson returns to Washington for a third season and first under new coach Ron Rivera. It'll be his 14th NFL season.

"Adrian Peterson is the epitome of what it means to be a pro in this league," Rivera said. "Adrian's leadership and passion towards the game of football will set

an example of what is expected of the players in this program moving forward." Peterson, who turns 35 in March, was the Redskins' leading rusher last season with 898 yards and five touchdowns on 211 carries. He currently ranks fifth on the NFL's career rushing list with 14,216 yards and is less than 1,100 from catching Barry Sanders for fourth.

"Still going strong," Peterson tweeted. "Let's get to work." Peterson originally signed with the Redskins in August

2018 after a season-ending knee injury to running back Derrius Guice. His 1,042-yard season led them to sign him for 2019 with an extra option year possible after that.

It's a reality now and solves one question in Washington's backfield. Third-down back Chris Thompson is a free agent who's not expected to return, but the Redskins have Guice and 2019 draft pick Bryce Love, who missed last season with injury, as expected. □



Washington Redskins' Adrian Peterson waves after given the Art Rooney Sportsmanship Award at the NFL Honors football award show Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020, in Miami.

Associated Press

Tech-starved government seeks industry's best, brightest

Denver (AP) — In this post-impeachment era of divisiveness and deadlock in the nation's capital, Uncle Sam has a message for top U.S. technologists: I Still Want You.

A Washington-based nerd strike force called the U.S. Digital Service is seeking private-sector coders, programmers and software engineers to make government user-friendly for a tech-savvy U.S. public. Launched after the 2013 crash of the Obama administration's Healthcare.gov website, the USDS recruits the nation's top tech talent for Peace Corps-style tours of duty to tackle the government's most pressing information management and online security problems.

It has an increasingly rare distinction as an initiative supported by both the Obama and Trump administrations, according to current and former USDS staff and White House officials. "We've been enthusiastic about USDS since Day One," said Mathew Lira, a special assistant to Trump in the White House Office of American Innovation. Early USDS projects — fixing the public-facing website of Obama's Affordable Care Act, helping green card holders apply for renewals electronically — might not be top Trump administration priorities today. But many projects continue: Enabling electronic



In this Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2020, photograph, Theresa Szczurek is shown in her office where she toils as the executive director of the Colorado Office of Information Technology in downtown Denver. Associated Press

access to health records for millions of Medicare patients and their doctors; building a robust and navigable Veterans Administration website; securing civilian agency and Defense Department websites.

"The government is incredibly short of engineers, designers and product managers," said USDS Administrator Matt Cutts. "You can apply for a mortgage on your phone, but government services are another matter."

The service also has spawned a growing civic tech movement assisting state and local governments as well as nonprofits.

Trump administration funding for USDS has been relatively constant. Operating out of the Office of Management and Budget, the service has grown to 180 people. Its \$13 million budget has held since 2019. In his new \$4.8 trillion budget plan for the 2021 fiscal year that starts Oct. 1, Trump seeks to hold down deficits by cutting domestic programs, and the USDS isn't spared at a proposed \$7 million. But officials say it's likely that the service, lauded for its work by Trump senior adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner, won't see any funding cuts as the budget process moves forward.

A constant challenge is

convincing well-paid private sector technicians to take a two-year sabbatical for the good of the country, despite the political climate. USDS purposely limits its tours to bring in the latest talent and let it go to stay abreast of industry.

Cutts — who pioneered Google's search engine optimization efforts before joining USDS — cites his own conversion.

"When I started in the tech industry, I firmly believed that Google's mission was to organize the information world," he said.

A change of heart and pursuit of purpose led him to civil service.

"Now a lot of my friends ask themselves how they

can have more impact on the world," Cutts said. "It's something we serve in buckets at USDS."

USDS boosters say the political transition from Obama to Trump hasn't stopped the agency from attracting bright and dedicated tech professionals. Others are skeptical, especially at a time of internal disputes at big companies like Google and Microsoft over corporate collaborations with immigration enforcement and other federal agencies.

Chris Calabrese, vice president for policy at the Center for Technology & Democracy, said he's concerned about how facial recognition and other technology is being deployed at the Mexican border.

"That might be a turnoff for some candidates," even if USDS isn't involved, he suggested.

His group backs a proposal by California Democratic U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris to authorize \$50 million a year for USDS, and millions more for state and local initiatives, through 2027. The White House hasn't taken a stand on the bill.

USDS leaders insist their mission is to help career IT staff members in government, not supplant them. Once a project is done, a code is rewritten, an application interface is created, USDS teams leave the new technology in place and move on.

A "Hack the Pentagon" program invites hackers to find security flaws. A new NATO system allows the coalition to track its efforts to support the Afghan government. New software enables U.S. troops to quickly detect enemy drones.

"Our goal is to come in, look at the problem with fresh eyes, deal with people in government who have been banging their heads against the wall, and empower those people," Cutts said.

Meanwhile, an increasing number of U.S. states are adopting the USDS model, including California, Colorado, New Jersey and Georgia. □

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Fed seems inclined to keep rates low as virus poses risks

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve officials were mostly optimistic about the U.S. and global economies last month, though they noted the risk posed by China's viral outbreak and said they were ready to keep their benchmark interest rate at its current low level in the coming months. Fed policymakers observed at their Jan. 28-29 meeting that risks to the U.S. economy had faded since their previous meeting in December, according to minutes released Wednesday. The Trump administration had reached a preliminary trade agreement with China, and Congress approved an updated trade pact with Canada and Mexico.

Still, a "number of downside risks remained prominent," officials said, including the coronavirus, which "had emerged as a new risk to the global growth outlook." Many Fed watchers have interpreted that caution as a signal that the Fed's next move, whenever it occurs, is more likely to be a cut, rather than hike. Traders are now betting that the odds of a cut by year's end are at 85%.

The minutes of the Fed's meeting showed that officials were ready to keep short-term rates at a range of 1.5% to 1.75% for the foreseeable future. Rates at that level would help the U.S. economy withstand



In this Feb. 12, 2020, file photo Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell testifies before the Senate Banking Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington.

threats from slower growth overseas, policymakers said, and help lift annual inflation back to the Fed's 2% objective. Persistently low inflation as measured by the Fed has been a hallmark of the economic expansion, now in its 11th year.

The officials "viewed the current stance of policy as likely to remain appropriate for a time, provided that incoming information about the economy remained broadly consistent" with their positive outlook, the minutes showed.

Stock prices, which had risen before the Fed minutes were released at 2 p.m. Eastern time, rose higher

afterward. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up about 150 points in mid-afternoon trading.

Chairman Jerome Powell said in testimony before Congress last week that U.S. growth looked durable and that the Fed would "carefully" monitor economic damage caused by the coronavirus. Economists at Goldman Sachs estimate

that the virus and Boeing's decision to suspend production of its troubled 737 MAX aircraft will cut growth by about three-quarters of a percentage point in the first three months of this year, as many companies' supply chains and consumer markets are at least partly cut off.

Much of that growth will likely be made up in fol-

lowing quarters, Goldman Sachs estimates.

At last month's policy meeting, several officials sought to highlight the Fed's determination to raise inflation back to its 2% target level. These officials "stressed that the (Fed) should be more explicit about the need to achieve its inflation goal on a sustained basis."

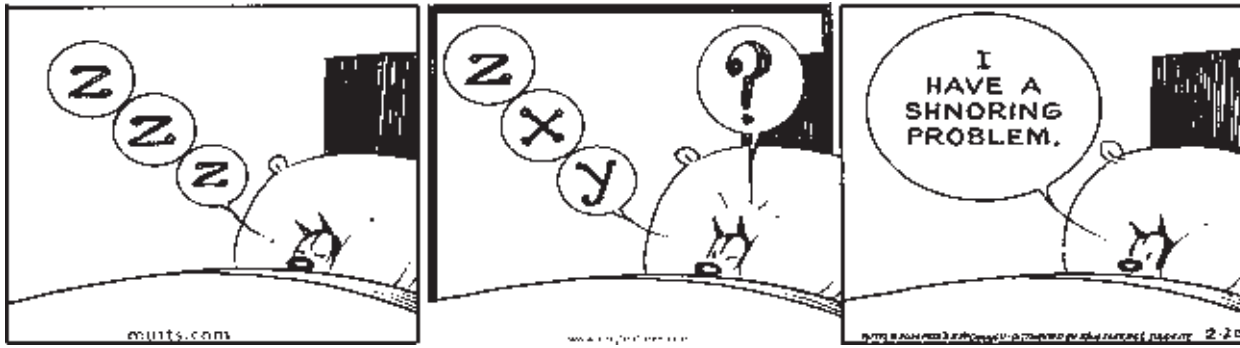
Several officials also supported the idea of allowing inflation to temporarily overshoot the 2% target to offset the nearly seven-year period in which inflation has been below that level. Doing so "might underscore the symmetry of that objective," the minutes said, meaning that the Fed will accept inflation modestly above 2% just as much as it has accepted price changes below the target.

As part of an ongoing review of its strategy framework and tools, the Fed is considering making such an approach even more explicit. Powell and other Fed officials worry that allowing inflation to stay too low for too long also drags down interest rates, giving the Fed less room to cut rates during a recession. □

Associated Press



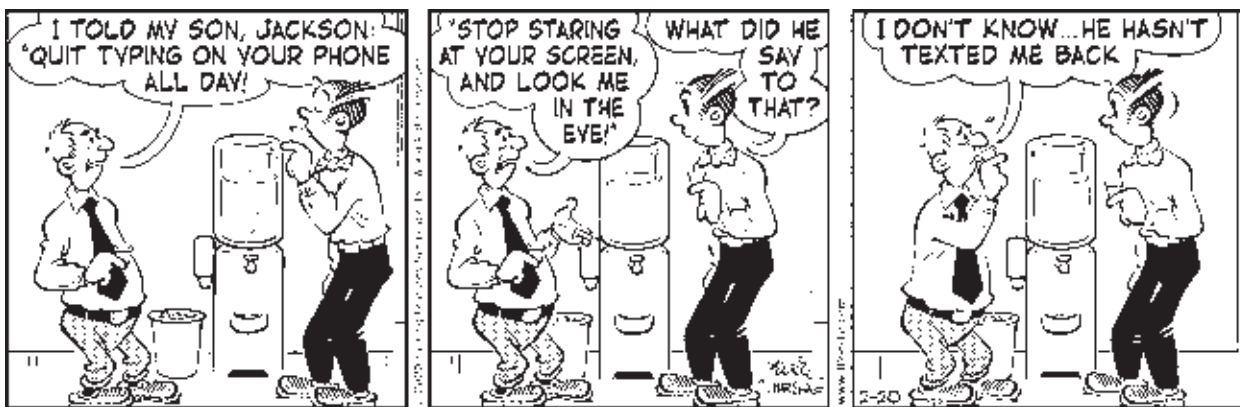
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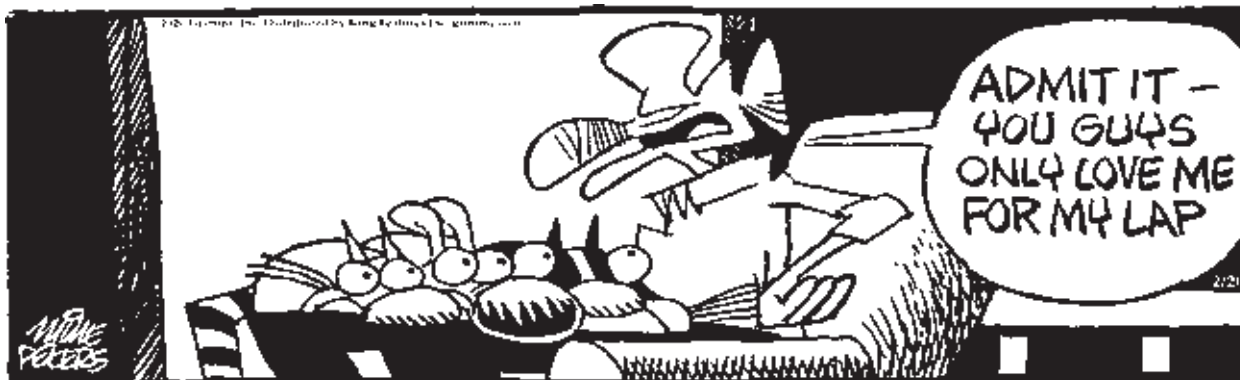
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Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

4		3		1		7		5
			5				2	
8	2			8			9	1
	4			3			2	
		1				8		
			1		9			
3		2		5		1		6

Difficulty Level ★★★

2/20

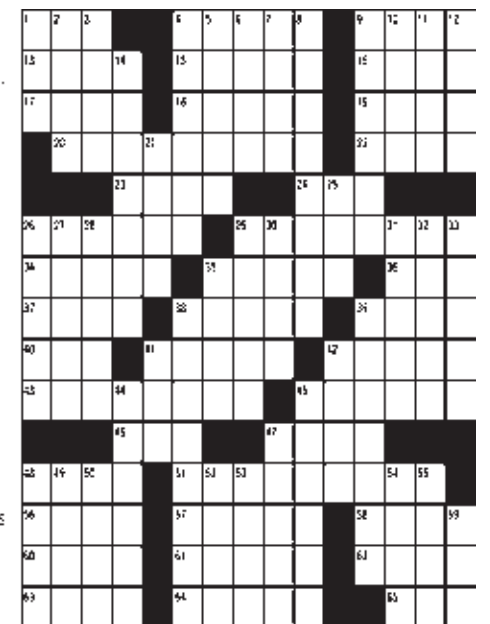
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

2	1	3	9	6	8	4	5	7
6	7	9	5	2	4	1	8	3
5	4	8	1	7	3	9	6	2
1	8	2	6	5	7	3	9	4
9	5	7	4	3	1	8	2	6
3	6	4	2	8	9	7	1	5
8	2	1	3	4	6	5	7	9
7	3	5	8	9	2	6	4	1
4	9	6	7	1	5	2	3	8

ACROSS

- 1 Four-yr. degrees
- 4 Caesar's 'I saw I conquered'
- 9 Big party
- 13 Night birds
- 15 Sr. Newton
- 16 unpleas'ly
- 17 Radar screen image
- 18 Where in Spain
- 19 Sailing vessel
- 20 Cowardly
- 22 Actor David Pierce of 'Frasier'
- 23 Bookish fellow
- 24 Siesta hour
- 26 Variables
- 29 Vendesome folks
- 34 Breath fresheners
- 35 Task
- 36 Volcanic as'n
- 37 Eras
- 38 Pub c meeting place
- 39 Tomorrow's show
- 40 Feminine crown
- 41 Obama's VP
- 42 Untrue
- 43 Overexerted
- 45 Occupator
- 46 Edgar Hoover's agcy
- 47 Sudden loud noise
- 48 Surgery treatment
- 51 Ode'st
- 56 Pipped
- 57 Lift something heavy
- 58 Warty amib ban
- 60 ... up, misbehaves
- 61 Shee crooked e years
- 62 Oh, for Pete's
- 63 Long deep cut
- 64 Dissuade
- 65 Animal enclosure



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

2/20/20

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

F	A	T	A	S	H	E	S	I	L	L	S
D	I	C	E	B	L	E	A	K	M	A	U
O	N	C	E	H	A	R	R	I	S	B	U
C	E	E	P	O	P	E	S	W	I	D	E
L	A	I	R	S	F	I	B				
E	R	E	C	T	S	D	E	F	E	A	T
A	O	R	T	A	G	R	E	E	T	C	O
T	W	A	S	B	L	O	N	D	S	C	A
S	E	T	P	I	E	T	Y	S	L	I	D
R	E	B	A	T	E	G	L	A	D	Y	S
A	R	E	S	L	I	M	E				
S	T	O	R	K	B	L	O	O	M	N	B
C	O	U	R	A	G	E	O	U	S		
A	D	Z	E	Y	A	R	N	S	E	A	S
M	O	O	N	M	U	D	D	Y	A	L	S

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2/20/20

DOWN

- 1 Pope or Nexchar
- 2 Hole-making tool
- 3 Undergarment
- 4 Apple drink
- 5 ... as the h's
- 6 Lion's neck hair
- 7 Actor George
- 8 Wicked winter weather
- 9 Chess piece
- 10 Sore
- 11 Fair to gnp the roadway
- 12 Excessive publicity
- 14 Srna pianos
- 21 NBA team
- 25 Misery
- 26 Pile up
- 27 Vision
- 28 Derisive smile
- 29 Tear to bits
- 30 Part of speech
- 31 Two strokes under par
- 32 Employee's delight
- 33 Not as nsky
- 35 Word alter area

- 36 Done
- 38 Dartboards
- 41 High chair accessory
- 42 Long sharp tooth
- 44 Anew
- 45 Horse's part
- 47 Sew ighly
- 48 Male animal
- 49 Comic actress mogere
- 50 ... and trails
- 52 It's a l Greek
- 53 Hiarous person
- 54 Daytime serial
- 55 away subtract
- 58 TV room, often

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Claws of health? Lobster blood could play role in new drugs

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Maine lobsters have long delighted tourists as the state's most beloved seafood. But one company thinks the crustaceans can save human lives by providing their blood for use in new drugs.

The effort, involving a longtime lobster scientist, wouldn't be the first example of coastal invertebrates being used to aid human health. Horseshoe crabs are harvested because their blood contains a protein used to detect contamination in medical products. A different startup company in Maine announced in 2016 that it would develop a bandage coated with a substance extracted from crushed lobster shells. And the U.S. Army has made use of field bandages treated with a blood clotting compound processed from shrimp shells.

The company working on the lobster blood project, Lobster Unlimited of Orono, is investigating whether lobster blood can be used as a potential weapon against viruses and cancer. Representatives with the company said results are promising — the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office issued them a patent in late October related to their work.

The blood is easy to come by because it's a byprod-



In this Friday, Feb. 14, 2020 photo, Dr. Robert Bayer holds a jar of frozen lobster blood in his lab in Orono, Maine.

Associated Press

uct of lobster processing, company head Robert Bayer said. Lobster blood is likely a long way from playing a role in new drugs, Bayer said, but there's "no question it has antiviral and anticancer properties" based on research needed to apply for the patent. "Right now, this blood is literally thrown out on the floor and goes down the drain," said Bayer, a professor emeritus of Animal and Veterinary Sciences at University of Maine. "We can collect millions of pounds of it, which makes it a viable product worth pursuing." The company proposes to

use compounds derived from hemolymph, which is lobster circulatory fluid, to improve human health and possibly the health of other mammals. Lobster Unlimited's looking for partners in the pharmaceutical industry to work with on the development of drugs. Scientists with the company have found that hemocyanin, a protein in the fluid, works as a powerful stimulant for the immune systems, Bayer said. For example, experiments show the substance can reduce the viral load of herpes simplex virus-infected cells, according to documents the

company filed with the U.S. patent office.

The next step is to find partners in industry to work on the development of new drugs, because the company doesn't plan to manufacture or sell its own, said Cathy Billings, another member of Lobster Unlimited. New products would also need to stand up to testing and then win approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Interest in developing non-food products from lobsters has grown in recent years as Maine's haul of the crustaceans has grown. The 2010s saw Maine's catch of

lobsters eclipse any previous decade by many millions of pounds. The remnants from processing them are used in everything from Christmas decorations and gardening soil to cooking stock. Using them in medicine represents a new frontier, Bayer said.

Invertebrate biology is very different from that of mammals, but there are some commonalities that could make it possible to use lobster products in medicine, said Diane Cowan, a Maine-based lobster biologist not involved in the Lobster Unlimited project. Those commonalities make it possible to use animals such as lobsters and horseshoe crabs to aid human health, she said.

Lobsters, like humans, have circulatory fluid, though lobster's is a kind of bluish gray as opposed to red, Cowan said. "So to have an idea that you can take something from one animal and use it for another is not outrageous," she said. "The circulatory fluid that runs through all bodies of all living animals is very similar." Steve Train, a Long Island, Maine, lobsterman, was a little surprised when he heard about the possibility of lobster blood playing a role in new drugs.

But if it can help people, "I hope it's true," he said, adding, "These scientists know more than I do." □

Courtroom psychology tests may be unreliable, study finds

By CHRISTINA LARSON WASHINGTON (AP) — Courts are not properly screening out unreliable psychological and IQ tests, allowing junk science to be used as evidence, researchers have concluded. Such tests can sway

judges or juries and influence whether someone gets custody of a child or is eligible for bail or capital punishment. The scientists looked at hundreds of different psychological tests used in recent court cases and

found that a third of those exams weren't reviewed in the field's most prominent manuals. Of those that were reviewed, just 40% were graded favorably. Nearly a quarter were deemed unreliable.

"There's huge variability in the psychological tools now being admitted in U.S. courts," said Tess Neal, an Arizona State University psychology professor and co-author of the study published Saturday in the journal Psychological Science in the Public Interest.

"There's a lot of stuff that looks like it's junk and should be filtered out by

the courts, but it's not being filtered out," said Neal.

Legal challenges to the validity of psychological tests occurred in less than 3% of cases, the researchers found.

"This paper is highly significant, in part because many people's fates are determined by these tests," said Dan Simon, an expert on law and psychology at the University of Southern California Law School, who was not involved in the research.

The new study is not the first critique of how science is used in the courts.

In 2009, the National Re-

search Council released an extensive report on courtroom science that found that "testimony based on faulty forensic science analyses may have contributed to wrongful convictions of innocent people." The critique prompted calls for reform, and only partial progress has been made, said Simon.

"Courts are supposed to sift out the junk science from the good science, as laid out in the federal rules of evidence" — a set of national guidelines that require that "testimony is the product of reliable principles and methods." □

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In the spirit of Whitney: Houston Hologram tour set to begin

By **ANDREW DALTON**
AP Entertainment Writer
BURBANK, Calif. (AP) —

Whitney Houston is about to appear on the concert stage again.

Eight years after her death, a holographic Houston will embark on a European tour that starts in England on Feb. 25 and runs through early April, with U.S. dates expected to follow.

"Now is just the right time," said Pat Houston, the singer's sister-in-law, former manager and the executor of her estate, which is producing the show in collaboration with BASE Hologram.

"In the spirit of Whitney, I know we're doing all the right things right now."

Last week, a few dozen members of the media were given a dress-rehearsal preview in Burbank, California of most of "An Evening With Whitney: The Whitney Houston Hologram Tour," which features a Houston projected onto a nearly invisible scrim on a stage with real dancers and a live backing band.

The concert set includes most of her biggest hits — "How Will I Know," "Saving All My Love For You," "I Will Always Love You," along with some unexpected rarities, including a cover of Steve Winwood's "Higher Love" that Houston first recorded three decades ago.

The show, which was first conceived five years ago, used a body double along with hundreds of hours of Houston performances and extensive CGI synthesizing.

"We created the hologram the same way they did Carrie Fisher in the 'Star Wars' movie 'Rogue One,'" said Marty Tudor, CEO of BASE Hologram, which has previously revived performing versions of dead singers including Roy Orbison and Maria Callas. "It's lengthy, it's tedious, it's a big, complicated process, but I think it worked."

The ambitious performance is the modest brainchild of Whitney Houston herself, in at least one respect.



In this Sept. 15, 2004 file photo, recording artist Whitney Houston performs at the 2004 World Music Awards at the Thomas and Mack Arena in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

While on her final European tour, she had an "unplugged" section of her show, with a stripped down band and minimal fanfare. Houston liked that so much that shortly before her death at age 48 on the eve of the 2012 Grammy Awards, she expressed a desire to one day do an entire tour that way. That concept became the model for the hologram concert.

"This is something that she wanted to do," Pat Houston said after the media preview of the show. "I get very emotional watching this, because it is so, so close to what she wanted. The only thing missing is her, physically."

□

Glamour, glitz at London Fashion Week despite stormy weather

By **SYLVIA HUI**
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Gale force winds and a deluge of rain may be causing havoc to much of Britain, but for the fashion crowd the show must go on.

Storm Dennis didn't stop models, celebrities and fashion insiders from donning their finest to attend London Fashion Week on Sunday, which showcased new season styles from designers including Victoria Beckham, Roland Mouret, Roksanda and Emilia Wickstead. American streetwear designer Tommy Hilfiger also made a guest appearance, showing neon yellow tracksuits and luxury sportswear in a collaboration collection with Formula One racing driver Lewis Hamilton.

Cameras flashed as the Beckham family turned out in style to support Spice Girl-turned-designer Victoria Beckham, who staged her catwalk show at central London's grand Banqueting Hall. Her sons Romeo and Cruz shared the front row with father and former soccer star David Beckham, while 8-year-old Harper got a comfy seat in

her father's lap.

On the catwalk, models wore checked shirts, smart tailored coats, culottes and velvet blazers, all paired with skin-tight, thigh-high leather boots in shades from blue to bright red. Beckham said "we're using the boot to throw things off in a little bit of a strange way."

Elsewhere, French designer Roland Mouret turned to 1980s London under Margaret Thatcher for inspiration. There were double-breasted blazers, exaggerated shoulders and androgynous suits; a sugary pink boxy blazer, worn with matching culottes, stood out in a mostly austere palette of greys, khakis and monochrome.

The fashion industry has come under increasing scrutiny from green groups, and Mouret — who counts Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, among his celebrity fans — was keen to respond to calls for more transparent and environmentally-friendly practices.

Sustainable fashion "is at the heart of my collection in a time where the process of creating clothes



A model wears a creation by designer Tommy Hilfiger at the Autumn/Winter 2020 fashion week runway show in London, Sunday, Feb. 16, 2020. (Photo by Vianney Le Caer/Invision/AP)

Associated Press

carries with it a personal responsibility," he said, and emphasized that he

aimed for the brand to be carbon neutral within the year. □



In this April 30, 2018, file photo, FSLC executive director Leslie Klainberg, left, honoree Helen Mirren and FSLC deputy director Eugene Hernandez attend the Film Society of Lincoln Center's 45th Chaplin Award Gala honoring Helen Mirren at Alice Tully Hall in New York.

Associated Press

Eugene Hernandez named director of New York Film Festival

NEW YORK (AP) — Eugene Hernandez will succeed Kent Jones as the director of the New York Film Festival, becoming only the fifth person to lead the esteemed Lincoln Center showcase for cinema in its 57-year history.

Lesli Klainberg, executive director of Film at Lincoln Center, announced the appointment Wednesday, naming Hernandez to the top position at arguably the most revered film festival in the country. Hernandez will oversee the New York Film Festival, along with Dennis Lim, the festival's new director of programming. Lim already presides over year-round programming for Film at Lincoln Center. Hernandez, who co-founded IndieWire, was first plucked away from the influential independent film website in 2010, when he joined Film at Lincoln Center as director of digital strategy. For the last six years, he's served as deputy director. Now, Hernandez will take the reins of the prestigious film festival he first attended as a 20-something moviegoer in the mid-90s and later frequented as a reporter.

"My whole life in New York starts here," Hernandez, whose first job in New York was at the nearby ABC studios, said in an interview alongside Klainberg in the Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center on the Lincoln Center campus ahead of Wednesday's announcement. Hernandez said his task as director will be to carry on the legacy of the New York Film Festival while shepherding it through a tumultuous, ever-evolving era in film. Like other festivals, New York is adapting to the proliferation of streaming services (whose films have frequently been shown at NYFF) and navigating changes that make bringing international films to U.S. audiences both easier and harder than ever. "We have to follow in the footsteps of the people that were here many de-

cades before us in bringing this art form to a wider audience," Hernandez said. "Now with this festival, we have an opportunity to bring it to an even wider audience and to engage people in different ways around the art form."

Jones, the festival's director since 2012, stepped down after last fall's 57th edition to dedicate himself more fully to filmmaking. Jones, a critic-filmmaker who had worked in documentary, last year made his fiction-film debut with the acclaimed "Diane," which in 2018 won top honors at the Tribeca Film Festival. Before Jones, the last five decades of the New York Film Festival were led by Richard Peña and Richard Roud, who co-directed the festival from its inception, initially teamed with Amos Vogel.

"When we realized that Kent was going to go off and become a filmmaker full time, we started to think about what we needed and what we wanted to do. We don't have many opportunities at institutions like ours to rethink things. The last two people that were here before Kent had their jobs for 25 years," Klainberg said. "I hope Eugene has many, many years ahead of him in this role."

Klainberg praised Hernandez as "a beloved person in the industry." He has also been a formative influence on how film festivals exist in the digital age. He co-created IndieWire in 1996. It was initially just a newsletter sent to a few hundred subscribers from Hernandez's AOL account. But IndieWire would grow to play a major role in bringing online more rapid film festival reports along with more comprehensive coverage of indie films.

The New York Film Festival has sometimes existed outside that new media ecosystem. Where other festivals use starry world premieres, awards races and acquisition markets to add buzz, the New York, coming

on the heels of Venice and Toronto, has remained the fall season's sober-minded, highly curated mainstay. Its main slate is usually limited to about 25 films, which regularly provides one of the best annual snapshots of world cinema.

"For us, the two key words are curation and audience," Hernandez said. "Thankfully, we don't have the same pressures to focus on world premieres exclusively as our mandate. If we can bring something new to a New York audience, and through our curatorial process find a film that's going to be special for an audience here, that's enough for us."

"That doesn't mean that every so often there isn't a world premiere," he said. "We last year had, I think, one of the most exciting and thrilling opening nights that I've been to."

That was Martin Scorsese's "The Irishman," which kicked off the 57th New York Film Festival. It was a major get for the festival, and one of the year's most anticipated premieres. The response at the festival, where "The Irishman" was widely greeted as a masterpiece, helped set it on a course to a number of awards, including 10 Oscar nominations. It was also a fitting match; Scorsese and Jones are friends and frequent collaborators. But Hernandez will have his own connections with filmmakers to trade on as he takes over the festival. This year's edition opens Sept. 25. "This festival has always been on the forefront of discovering and showcasing what's next in cinema," he said. "It's exciting to see that continue and to be a part of it." □

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PH MON-FRI 6:40 | 8:50
SAT-SUN 2:20 | 4:30 | 6:40 | 8:50

PBP MON-THU 5:30 | 7:35 | 9:40
FRI 5:30 | 7:35 | 9:40 | 11:45
SAT 3:25 | 5:30 | 7:35 | 9:40 | 11:45
SUN 3:25 | 5:30 | 7:35 | 9:40

THE CALL OF THE WILD

HARRISON FORD | KAREN GILLAN

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-THU 6:00 | 8:35
FRI 6:00 | 8:35 | 11:05
SAT 3:25 | 6:00 | 8:35 | 11:05
SUN 3:25 | 6:00 | 8:35

PBP MON-FRI 4:10 | 6:40 | 9:10
SAT-SUN 1:40 | 4:10 | 6:40 | 9:10

THE GENTLEMEN

MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY | CHARLIE HUNNAM

PBP MON-FRI 4:05 | 6:40 | 9:15
SAT-SUN 1:30 | 4:05 | 6:40 | 9:15

EMMA.

ANYA TAYLOR-JOY | TANYA REYNOLDS

PH MON-FRI 6:00
SAT-SUN 3:20 | 6:00

BLUE STORY

STEPHEN ODUBOLA | MICHAEL WARD

PH MON-FRI 8:45
SAT-SUN 8:45 | 10:50

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

JAMES MARSDEN | JIM CARREY

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-THU 6:00 | 8:20
FRI 6:00 | 8:20 | 10:40
SAT 3:40 | 6:00 | 8:20 | 10:40
SUN 3:40 | 6:00 | 8:20

CXC MON-THU 5:40 | 8:00
FRI 5:40 | 8:00 | 10:20
SAT 3:20 | 5:40 | 8:00 | 10:20
SUN 3:20 | 5:40 | 8:00

PBP MON-THU 4:20 | 6:35 | 8:50
FRI 4:20 | 6:35 | 8:50 | 11:05
SAT 2:05 | 4:20 | 6:35 | 8:50 | 11:05
SUN 2:05 | 4:20 | 6:35 | 8:50

SPANISH PBP MON-FRI 4:55 | 7:10
SAT-SUN 2:40 | 4:55 | 7:10

WILL SMITH | MARTIN LAWRENCE

BAD BOYS FOR LIFE

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH MON-THU 6:05 | 8:40
FRI 6:05 | 8:40 | 11:15
SAT 3:30 | 6:05 | 8:40 | 11:15
SUN 3:30 | 6:05 | 8:40

PBP MON-FRI 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20
SAT-SUN 1:20 | 4:00 | 6:40 | 9:20

MARGOT ROBBIE | MARY ELIZABETH WINSTED

BIRDS OF PREY

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PBP MON-THU & SUN 9:25
FRI-SAT 9:25 | 11:40

LUCY HALE | MAGGIE Q

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'Good Times' Ja'Net DuBois dies; co-wrote 'Jeffersons' theme

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ja'Net DuBois, who played the vivacious neighbor Willona Woods on "Good Times" and composed and sang the theme song for "The Jeffersons," has died.

DuBois' song "Movin' on Up" provided a joyous intro to "The Jeffersons" during the show's 10-season run.

BernNadette Stanis, who played Thelma Evans Anderson on "Good Times" and remained close to DuBois, said she learned of her death Tuesday from the actress' daughter.

"She used to keep us laughing all the time," Stanis said, warmly recalling her friend. "She was very, very talented. If she wasn't singing ... she was creating a character to make us laugh."

Police in Glendale, California, said they received a report about DuBois' death late Monday. She appeared to have died of natural causes and no investigation is ongoing, police Sgt. Dan Stubbs said. No additional details, including her age, were immediately available.

Stanis said DuBois appeared to be in good health when they appeared two weeks ago at a signing event. Her birth date was something she kept to herself, Stanis said. "Nobody really knows," said Stanis, who recalled telling DuBois, "'Oh, you're so lucky. Nobody knows your age, girl!'"

DuBois had a prolific career beyond the 1970s hit "Good Times," winning two Emmy Awards for her voice work on the WB series "The PJs."

DuBois' Willona was the single, sexy neighbor and best friend to star Esther Rolle's Florida Evans. Though the comedy had plenty of one-liners, DuBois' appearances gave an extra dose of comedic relief. DuBois showed off more of her dramatic skills when a young Janet Jackson joined the show as the abused child Penny; DuBois' character would go on to adopt Penny, and the story line also forged a long, close relationship between DuBois and Jackson, who would go on to become a multiplatinum superstar; she cast DuBois as her mother in her 1986 "Control" video. Jackson paid tribute to DuBois in an Instagram post on Tuesday.

"I am so very saddened to hear my longtime friend Ja'Net DuBois has passed away. I saw first hand how she broke stereotypes and changed the landscape for Black women in entertainment," she wrote. "I'm grateful in recent years I had a chance to see her and create more lasting memories. I pray for comfort for all her family and friends."

Oscar-winner Viola Davis, who played the role of Florida in the live version of



In this Feb. 17, 2013, photo, Ja'Net DuBois attends Los Angeles Premiere of "Free Angela and All Political Prisoners" at Pan African Film Festival at Rave Cinemas Baldwin Hills in Los Angeles, California.

Associated Press

"Good Times" that aired on ABC in December, posted a picture of herself, DuBois, Stanis, Tiffany Haddish (who played Willona) and Corinne Foxx on the set of the broadcast.

"Oh man!!! Just saw you! What a pleasure it was to meet you," she wrote. "You shaped so much of the best memories of my childhood! God bless you, Ja'net DuBois!"

DuBois' career started in theater, where she appeared in Broadway productions of "Golden Boy" and "A Raisin in the Sun,"

according to a biography on her website. A performance in "The Hot I Baltimore" in Los Angeles caught the eye of Norman Lear, who developed "Good Times" and "The Jeffersons."

DuBois' Willona was a "true diva back then, fancy dressing, the wigs, doing the thing... the real woman woman," said Stanis. "She brought it, didn't she?" Her film credits included 1970's "Diary of a Mad Housewife," "I'm Gonna Git You Sucka" and "Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle."

She was credited in numerous other films as varied as "Basic Instinct," "Next Friday" and "Tropic Thunder," which included "Movin' on Up." DuBois was a co-founder of the Pan African Film Festival, which since 1992 has showcased films meant to promote a greater cultural understanding of people of African descent. The festival, which is being held in Los Angeles and runs through Sunday, on Tuesday released an image mourning DuBois, calling her "Our Founder, Now Our Angel." □

Burger King breaks the mold with new advertising campaign

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Business Writer

Burger King is breaking the mold in its new advertising campaign.

The burger chain is portraying its Whopper covered in mold in print and TV ads running in Europe and the U.S. The message: Burger King is removing artificial preservatives from its signature burger.

The company, already known for irreverent ad campaigns, turned it up a notch, including a time-lapse of a decaying burger on Twitter. That imagery

goes beyond the print ads that show a 28-day-old burger — a week beyond. Early reaction to the campaign Wednesday was a mix of applause for the shift away from preservatives, to disgust.

The restaurant, based in Miami, Florida, says it has removed artificial preservatives from the Whopper in several European countries — including France, Sweden and Spain — and around 400 of its 7,346 U.S. restaurants.

It plans to remove preservatives from Whoppers served



This undated image provided by Burger King shows an advertising campaign image with the Whopper hamburger.

Associated Press

in all of its restaurants this year.

The Whopper is topped with onions, lettuce, toma-

to, mayonnaise and pickles, all of which will contain no artificial preservatives.

By the end of this year, Burger King said all food items — including sandwiches, sides and desserts — will be free from artificial colors, artificial flavors and artificial preservatives in the U.S. and select European countries, including Germany and the United Kingdom.

McDonald's announced in 2018 that it was removing artificial colors, flavors and preservatives from seven of its burgers. □

Crafts: Turn stained, shrunken sweaters into cozy mittens

By **HOLLY RAMER**

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A certain groundhog's prediction notwithstanding, there's plenty of winter left where I live in New Hampshire. That means it's time to restock my supply of mittens, an alarming number of which seem to disappear since the temperature started to dip last fall. Luckily, in addition to losing accessories, I also have a habit of accidentally shrinking or staining sweaters, which makes them perfect for upcycling into handy hand warmers.

I found numerous patterns and tutorials online for turning old sweaters into mittens, some of them as simple as tracing around a hand and sewing a single seam. Others were more complex, involving multiple pieces, linings and cuffs. If you're less accident-prone than me and don't have a pile of usable sweaters, check out your local thrift store for inexpensive options. Sweaters with plenty of ribbing at the cuffs and hems are particularly useful for mitten-making. Wool sweaters are ideal in terms of warmth, especially if they've been shrunk and felted to make an even more durable fabric.

Here's what I found, with each method rated from 1 to 10, with 10 indicating the least expensive, easiest and best results:

TRACE AND CUT:

If you remember tracing your hand to draw a turkey in kindergarten, this is even easier. Following the instructions on a craft blog called Practically Functional, I made a simple pattern by tracing around my hand on a piece of paper, cutting out the shape and placing it along the bottom edge of an inside-out



This Feb. 4, 2020 photo taken in Hopkinton, N.H., shows three pairs of handmade mittens, each constructed from sweaters using slightly different techniques. If winter is lasting longer than the groundhog predicted where you live, consider restocking your mitten supply and clearing out your closet at the same time. Instead of tossing stained or accidentally shrunken sweaters, turn them into cozy mittens. (AP Photo/Holly Ramer)

Associated Press

sweater. I cut around the pattern and then sewed around the shape, leaving the bottom open. While it took me closer to 15 minutes than the 10 minutes promised in the tutorial, this was indeed a super fast way to make a pair of mittens. But the result was the least professional looking of the three methods, and the least warm, given that there is no lining. Still, this would be a good way to use up old sweaters, and in climates warmer than New England, a single layer might be plenty.

COST: 9

EASE: 9

RESULTS: 5

FLEECE LINED:

I next tried a tutorial on a blog called Five Green Acres that was a step up in both style and function, but also included a lot more steps. Using the downloadable patterns, I cut out three pieces of sweater for

each mitten: a mitten back plus two pieces that get sewn together to become the palm and thumb. The same process is followed to construct a fleece lining layer. The lining is placed over the finished sweater layer, right sides together, and the two pieces are sewn together at the cuff, leaving a small opening for turning so the lining can then be pushed down into the mitten. None of the steps would be difficult for anyone with a bit of sewing experience, but between cutting out six pieces and sewing nine seams, this project took just under an hour for one pair of mittens. I had fleece on hand, but purchasing it would add a bit to the cost. The finished product, however, is warm, and more tailored-looking than the first pair of mittens. I used the large child/small adult size, and found it fit well, though the thumb



This Feb. 4, 2020 photo taken in Hopkinton, N.H., shows three pairs of handmade mittens, each constructed from sweaters using slightly different techniques. If winter is lasting longer than the groundhog predicted where you live, consider restocking your mitten supply and clearing out your closet at the same time. Instead of tossing stained or accidentally shrunken sweaters, turn them into cozy mittens. (AP Photo/Holly Ramer)

Associated Press



This Feb. 4, 2020 photo taken in Hopkinton, N.H., shows three pairs of handmade mittens, each constructed from sweaters using slightly different techniques. If winter is lasting longer than the groundhog predicted where you live, consider restocking your mitten supply and clearing out your closet at the same time. Instead of tossing stained or accidentally shrunken sweaters, turn them into cozy mittens. (AP Photo/Holly Ramer)

Associated Press

could be a bit longer.

COST: 7

EASE: 7

RESULTS: 7

LINED AND CUFFED:

The most involved tutorial I tried was written by Beth Huntington of the Renegade Seamstress blog, and hosted on the eHow.com website. While the instructions call for using two coordinating sweaters, one sweater would also work. The steps are similar to the other fleece-lined mitten tutorial, though the shapes of the pattern pieces are slightly different. The main difference is this technique involved cutting off the cuffs of a sweater and attaching them to the mitten linings. That way, instead of sewing the lining and outer mittens together, the lining

is just tucked into the mitten and the cuff extends out and folds over the mitten exterior. Though this technique requires sweaters with narrow or ribbed cuffs (I had one sweater with bell-shaped sleeves that would not be appropriate), it actually was easier than trying to sew the lining and outer mitten together in the previous tutorial. The finished result was more polished-looking, and depending on the sweaters used, could be a way to mix and match different colors and patterns. My main problem with this technique was the pattern only comes in one size, which turned out to be a bit small for my hands.

COST: 7

EASE: 8

RESULTS: 8

